

Foodie Foursome

New Latin American Influence In Orange

You can now experience authentic Colombian cuisine, in your own backyard, at La Fonda Colombiana in Orange. The restaurant is in the front of the plaza across from Taco Town and the Hitchcock Plaza. La Fonda Colombiana's cuisine, artistically inspired by the Coffee Triangle of Risaralda, Quindio and Caldas, is a great venture into Latin American tastes.

Their menu is delicious, reasonably priced and run by general manager Alejandra Gutierrez. Their Colombian master chef, Asdr Ubal, brings an innovative approach to classic recipes for a modern approach to Colombian cuisine. Cindy, Dan, Melissa and I were about to enter a Colombian gastronomic tour with authentic and traditional dishes.

We started with three appetizers. We had to try one of the best known Latin foods: the empanadas. We had both the beef and chicken filled pastries. They were abundantly filled with seasoned meats that had finesse and balance, in a lightly and properly fried

pastry served with two yummy sauces.

Next was a Colombian tradition. The Colombian papas criollas grow wild in the Andes highlands. These golf ball-sized potatoes have a thin, tender skin and a buttery yellow interior that yields an amazing flavor when steamed, boiled or fried. They did not disappoint. Their house sauces were also a great addition to the dish.

Last up was more of an American staple. Their chicken wings were large, meaty and cooked to a delicate crunch on the outside with a juicy meat interior. We went with two styles. Their barbecue sauce was tasty and slightly sweet, while their hot wings packed a little heat, but not so much that our taste buds were affected for the entrees yet to come.

We continued our tour with the churrasco La Fonda. It is a prominent feature of Latin



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American steakhouse restaurants serving grilled meats. Ours was an incredible skirt steak, marinated and grilled to perfection: slightly medium rare, tender and juicy. It was served over tostones with rice and a sweet plantain.

The toston La Fonda was next, a perfectly-sized mound of incredibly tasty marinated and shredded chicken with fried plantain, shredded cheese and topped with a fabulous chunky guacamole. The pollo a la parilla was a pounded and grilled chicken breast. It was a generous size, elegant in its simplicity, and tender. It was served with rice, sweet plantains and salad with a house-made vinaigrette. The last entrée was the salmon asado. This was a skillfully prepared and chosen cut of salmon that was prepared to perfection, moist and extremely tender. The salad, again with house made vinaigrette, was the perfect ac-

companiment with the rice and fried yucca.

The evening was winding down and we were ready for dessert. The smell of fresh-ground Colombian coffee permeated the air. They actually sell custom bags of this rich nectar. Their coffee, imported from the Colombian Coffee Triangle, supports the single mothers that work the coffee plantations. We divided the legendary Latin desserts among us: tres leches and flan. The tres leches had a masterful texture and taste all while maintaining ultimate moisture. The flan was "oh so smooth" and seemed to almost melt in your mouth, seducing the palate.

La Fonda Colombiana is open seven days a week for lunch and dinner, and on Friday and Saturday until 2 a.m. It is located at 200 Boston Post Rd. For reservations call 203-298-4150.

Steve Cooper is a photographer and event promoter. He runs the Milford Performance Center.

Travel Matters

Beautiful Basque Country

There's something quite disarming about the Basque country. Located in northern Spain around the western end of the Pyrenees on the coast of the Bay of Biscay, it includes parts of north-central Spain and southern France. Having just spent five wonderful days there, I can say that the towns and cities we visited are a charming mix of old and new with fabulous food, beautiful vistas and incredible architecture. We miss it already.

We went to Bilbao, Guernica, San Sebastian, Getaria and Bayonne, France – a wonderful mix of cultures and experiences.

Bilbao was transformed in 1997 by the opening of Frank Gehry's Guggenheim Museum, which brought tourism to the largest city in Basque country. In fact, it's now referred to as the "Bilbao effect" to refer to how art changes everything in terms of attracting people to a destination. Today Bil-

bao is a wonderful mix of diverse geography, delicious cuisine and amazing architecture. The Guggenheim literally glistens in the sun along the river.

We enjoyed a couple of fabulous Michelin star meals there, at Los Fueros and Urregin in Old Town.

We also did a couple of side trips. One side trip was to Guernica (or Gernika in Basque). In 1937, during the Spanish Civil War, Guernica was totally destroyed by German aircraft. This act inspired Picasso's legendary painting, which has long evoked anti-war sentiment. Guernica is now partnering with other cities with commitments to cooperate with them in culture, education and industry.

In Gexto, we visited the Vizcaya Bridge,



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a hanging bridge over the estuary that was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site. On the way to San Sebastian, we stopped in the small fishing village of Getaria, with beautiful beaches, a delicious gelato store and restaurants serving grilled fish on the beach.

San Sebastian has one of the best locations of any city in Europe, with its beautiful beaches surrounded by the Pyrenees and more Michelin star restaurants per capita than any other city in Europe. While we were there, the San Sebastian International Film Festival was in full swing and celebrating its 70th anniversary. The old town is notable for great shopping and delicious pintxo bars. Pintxos are similar to tapas, but uniquely Basque. At a pintxo bar, you can select up to 35 different tapas

and order by number, easily making a dinner out of this experience. We enjoyed visiting the Palacio de Miramar, the summer residence of the Spanish royal family until 1973, beautifully situated on a hillside above La Concha Beach.

Leaving San Sebastian for Bordeaux, France, we stopped for lunch at Bayonne, France near the chic seaside town of Biarritz. Bayonne has an impressive cathedral alongside famous chocolate shops and fashion boutiques. The city has a beautiful location at the confluence of two rivers: the Nive and Adour.

I recommend you go to the Basque country soon – before it becomes more well-known.

Karen Quinn-Panzer is the owner of Dream Vacations Quinn Panzer Travel. She can be reached at kpanzer@dreamvacations.com or 203-647-3107.

Orange Business Streamlines Administrative Burden After Death

A new business in Orange is seeking to streamline the difficult process of navigating the raft of paperwork that follows the death of a loved one.

Transference LLC is an administrative consulting firm founded by Ed Knight with clients throughout New England. It aims to act as a partner for recently surviving spouses and family members to guide them through the "administrative nightmare" that inevitably come from that loss.

"Our company's mission is to alleviate all the administrative stress. Our process lessens the hardship experienced by executors and family members," Knight said in a press release. "We know it's always a challenge to handle the

paperwork by yourself. At Transference we simplify, and specialize, in what can be considered the complex practice of re-registering the accounts of the deceased. In other words, we know which steps are needed when removing the deceased's name from all financial related accounts."

Transference LLC is located at 1045 Willard Rd. and can be reached at 203-623-6083 or transference.com.

Hazard Survey Open To Public

The South Central Regional Council of Governments and its municipalities are working together to prepare an update to the Multi-Jurisdiction Hazard Mitigation Plan to identify and assess the region's natural hazard risks (such as flooding, winter storms, and hurricanes) and determine how to best minimize or manage those risks.

The SCRCOG has launched a survey to allow local residents to provide their opinions and participate in the mitigation planning process. The information provided

will help the planning team to better understand local concerns and issues.

Participation in the survey is voluntary and none of the information provided will be attributed to individuals directly.

To participate in the survey go to surveymonkey.com/r/SCRCOG2023.

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