

## La Ranchera's Mexican restaurant

To step into the colourful lightness of La Ranchera's restaurant is a pleasant surprise as the shaded picture window conceals any view of the interior from the road. The chef's kitchen and bar is open to the diners and is brightened with LEDs. The cleanliness and friendliness is obvious even before you interact with the waitress who knows everything that will help you understand the menu, drinks and customs of Mexican eating. Our friendly waitress saw that we were seated comfortably and from then on was aware when we needed her, yet was not around when we wanted to be left alone.

Cocktails are La Ranchera's speciality. Their foamy 'Strawberry Daiquiri', made from rum and strawberry, is beautiful to look at and pure heaven to drink. 'Bay Breeze' is a combination of cranberry, pineapple and vodka. Its name holds exotic promise and it comes, well iced, in a long glass. 'Paraiso' is a gorgeous mix of tequila, passion fruit and lime. Margaritas and wines are listed, but you may want a beer from an imported selection.

We relaxed with our drinks while Betty the chef prepared our starters. 'Ceviche De Pescado' and 'Zina pecuero' – 'Mexican Michoacan' brought us new taste experiences. The freshness of the salad and its dressing's flavour were very attractive to my palate. Jalapeños brought subtle heat to one dish. Lime is in the salad dressing, sauces and marinades too and, its colour is in the restaurant's decor.

Betty (well, Beatrice really) was born and raised in Mexico. She loves food and, now in Kingsbridge she skilfully prepares and cooks these authentic dishes to order. Her restaurant is so highly rated it has been awarded the Trip Advisor's Certificate of Excellence.

Her kitchen is in full view of your table. She produces fresh dishes from chicken, beef and fish based on Mexican home cooking and caters brilliantly for groups of friends and family. Some dishes on the menu are for sharing.

Our Mains were: 'Polla Asado al Tequila' (Chicken Tequila) - char-grilled chicken breast served with a creamy tequila sauce, guacamole, leafy salad and salsa. Delicious.

'Enchiladas Morelianas': 3 corn rolled tortillas infused in a soft chilli sauce, filled with cheese and onion, topped with sauté potatoes and carrots and finished with crunchy lettuce crumbly cheese and cream and, unless you are vegetarian, served with chicken. The authentic flavours from Mexico are wonderful. Yes, chilli heats many dishes, but at your request, it can be as mild as you wish, or, for brave first timers and palates that are accustomed to it, it can be vibrantly hot.

Desserts: Lime Key Pie; Ice cream and sorbet; 'Churros' – they are fingers of 'daugh' pastry, fried and sprinkled with cinnamon sugar and with a chocolate or caramel sauce for dipping.

'La Ranchera' is a century old nickname for food prepared by wives who ran ranches while men were away. We have good restaurants of various traditions in Kingsbridge. Well known are Cafe Asia and Maha-Bharat, both in Mill Street. Like La Ranchera, their standards compare well with the best of their kind nationally. La Ranchera's chef brings cooking skills of a high and honest standard to her restaurant. Open 6.0pm Mon to Sat. Call 01548 856707