



## THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO INSTITUTE OF ORAL HISTORY

Interviewee: Marion Christina Rohrleitner  
Interviewer: Meredith E. Abarca  
Project: El Paso Food Voices  
Location: El Paso, Texas  
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Terms of Use: Unrestricted Private Kitchen  
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Transcriber / Summary: Meredith E. Abarca

In this food story, Marion Christina Rohrleitner speaks of her Austrian culinary heritage. As she recalls favorite childhood foods that her mother and grandmother would make such a Kasspressknoedelsuppe (Tyrolean Cheese Dumpling Soup), Griensnokerlsuppe (Semolina Dumpling Soup), Speckknoedelsuppe (Bacon Dumpling Soup), she introduces the history of working class, poor farmers' meals and their ability to recycle food. Nothing goes to waste. With other dishes such as Apple Strudel, Goulash, Schulzkrapfer Southern Tyrolean Ravioli, and the Croissant, she recalls Austrian's 400 plus years of contested histories and conflict dating back to the Ottoman Empire. This intersection of culinary histories from Germany, Northern Italy, France, and Hungary, makes of Austrian foodways a "mutt" cuisine. Her family is also a mixture of different cultural/ethnic backgrounds. A family rumor has it that this background includes Roma (gypsy) people. After fourteen years of living in El Paso, Texas, Marion's (and her Austrian family and friends) culinary palate has become even more multifaceted by now including avocados, nopales, Hatch Green Chiles, tamales—and at least once, menudo. Of all the soups her grandmother made, the one she likes the least and prefers never to eat because of the smell was a tripe soup. On her first visit to El Paso as a job candidate for a position in the literature program, she was introduced to one of El Paso's staples: menudo. As someone who primely eats vegetarian meals, she also speaks of how the culinary scene in El Paso has changed over the last fourteen years to the point that now there are number of places where someone with a special diet, such a vegetarian, has a number of choices were to eat: Emeli (A James Beard finalist), Rulis' International Kitchen, Taconeta, Ripe, Crave, and Eloise.

Length of interview 40:58

Length of Transcript n/a