

cuadernos

Fall 2022

Vol. II, Issue 3

# Otoño: Cosechas y Cazas



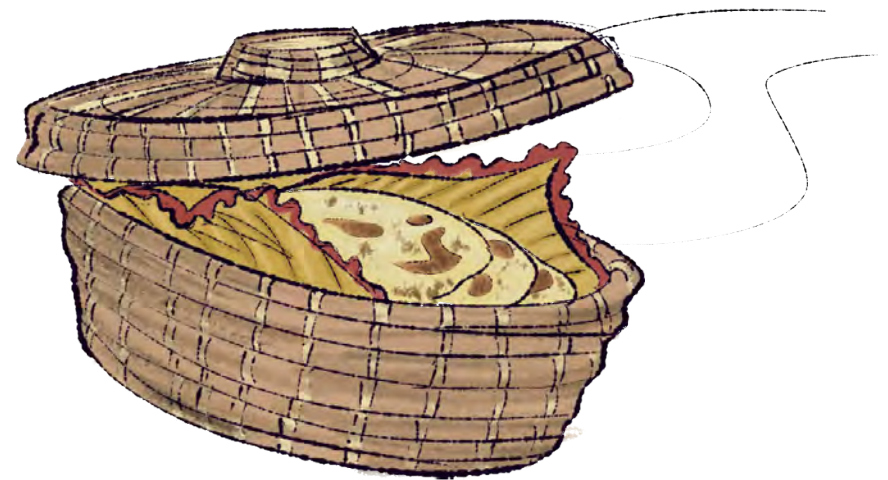
(Harvest and  
Houses)

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# Otoño: Cosechas y Cazas



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This cuaderno was developed for the  
*Manitos Community Memory Project*

Written by Jesús Cuauhtémoc Villa

# Preface

I'll never forget my first Fall away from New Mexico. I was born in Albuquerque and raised between my parents' home in Las Cruces and my grandparents' home in La Villita, so I had grown accustomed to seeing all four seasons every year. Fall was always my favorite: even when you watched the leaves change and the sun slowly rise lower in the sky, it would always seem like practically overnight the sunlight turned from yellow to orange and the air from warm and dry to crisp and sharp.

My first Fall away from my *querencia* therefore came as quite a shock. In 2007, I left home for Tempe, Arizona (in the Phoenix area) to attend Arizona State University. I quickly learned that moving only one state over could also feel like moving to a completely different world. In this world, the desert was lush, green, and dominated by towering cacti, rather than high, dry, and graced by yucca and sotol. In this world, the smell of roasting chile was a rare find, rather than an ever-present blessing. Most of all, in this world it was hot. HOT hot. Like, *all* hot, ese.

Gone were the four seasons of the llano and Río Grande; here were the two seasons of la Alta Pimería: about six months each of Oven and

Springtime. I arrived in late Oven (better known as August). Appropriately, I felt gaslit: everybody kept calling it "Fall," but straight through November it was hotter than any Summer in New Mexico. When the weather finally did change, people called it "Winter"...but the leaves never fell or even changed. I remember one January I saw a stately cottonwood tree on campus with half its leaves golden and the other half green — as if it couldn't make up its mind whether to drop its leaves since it was *technically* Winter, but realistically closer to a New Mexican April afternoon, temperature-wise.

I've since become acclimated — or naturalized, as I like to joke — to Arizona's two seasons. However, immediately after arriving, I made a point of returning to my *querencia* at least once or twice a year to get a real Fall and a real Winter. Every year, that is, except the last few (for sadly obvious reasons). It was therefore a real joy and privilege to be asked to write these Fall and Winter cuadernos. In my COVID- and grad school-necessitated exile, it's been a special joy and comfort to revisit Fall and Winter in Nuevo México through writing and reflecting. I hope that reading this cuaderno will help you, wherever you are, to understand or reconnect with the glory of Fall in New Mexico.

*Bendiciones, Jesús Cuauhtémoc Villa*

# Weather: Llega el Frío

Fall is a breathtaking time in our *querencia*. The days grow shorter, the nights grow longer, and the sun slowly begins its journey South. Our trusty *enebro* (juniper), *pino* (pine), and piñón trees, of course, remain steadfastly green, but the leaves of the *álamos* (cottonwoods) and *olmos* (elms) shift from green to gold. The leaves of the *roble* (oak) turn copper and bronze and those of the *sicómoro* (sycamore) turn red and orange. Even the sunlight begins to shift as the yellow light of Summer becomes the orange light of Fall. The color shift of sun and tree turns the green *bosques* (river forests) into a river of fire cutting through the llanos and canyons. The winter chill begins to creep into the air – barely recognizable at first, then growing into a gentle nipping at your face and fingers, a crispness that carries the smell of woodsmoke, roasting chiles, and the coming dark. Fall is upon us.

All these signs tell us it is time to harvest. The three Indigenous sisters – *maíz*, *frijoles*, y *calabaza* (corn, beans, and squash) – are harvested and prepared for storage. The other two Indigenous sisters that people tend to forget, *chile* and *añil*

(sunflower, aka *girasol*), are also gathered and processed; the smell of roasting chile is the official smell of Fall in Nuevo México. The temperature continues to drop, and the first snows may even begin to fall in the mountains and highlands.

The land is preparing for its long rest. The winters are often dark, bitterly cold, and long. The Fall readies us for the time of stillness, cold, and looking within.



ILLUSTRATION: LILY PADILLA

# Medicine Making: Curando con Yerbitas

Fall is the time to harvest many of our most important ancestral crops, but it is also a time for harvesting some of our most important ancestral medicines. Every season has *yerbas* (herbs) that are best gathered at specific times of year when their medicinal properties are most concentrated in their bark, flower, leaves, roots, seeds, or stems. *Curanderos* (traditional healers) collect many *yerbas* in the Fall, always thanking the plants and leaving an offering of prayer, water, *punche* (tobacco, aka tabaco), or other sacred herbs in exchange for the plant's sacrifice. Fall is the time to collect *algodón* (cotton bark), *capulín* (chokecherry bark), *cebadilla* (green gentian root), *equinácea* (echinacea root), *espárragos* (asparagus root), *vara de San José* (hollyhock root), and many other medicinal plants. Cough syrups are made with *yerbas*, honey, brandy, and lime juice; tinctures are made with *yerbas* and grain alcohol; and teas are made as needed with *yerbas* and boiling water. With cold and flu season coming, it's important to make as much medicine as possible to help keep the community healthy through the long, cold Winter months.



ILLUSTRATION: NATASHA VASQUEZ



# Día de San Francisco de Asís: Santo de los Animalitos

October 4th is an important day in the Fall calendar. This is the day some of us celebrate *San Francisco de Asís* (St. Francis of Assisi), the patron saint of animals, children, and the environment. People everywhere love animals, kids, and nature, so San Francisco is almost universally beloved: it is common to see his statue in the yards and gardens of Catholics, non-Catholics, and non-religious people alike. His feast day also marks an important harvest festival, in which some foods begin to be harvested and other foods already harvested are shared in beautiful fiestas. To this day, you can see many processions and harvest festivals on or around October 4th.

ILLUSTRATION: NATASHA VASQUEZ



# Hunting: La Vida, la Muerte, y el Monte

For many in New Mexico, Fall is hunting season (and has been ever since the first hunters, the ancient ancestors of the Indigenous peoples, arrived in the region at least 20,000 years ago). It is the perfect time to hunt: many animals have fattened themselves in preparation for the long Winter months, and many species gather in great herds for their mating season. Today, native game animals hunted in the Fall include *alazán* (elk), *berrendo* (pronghorn), *borrego cimarrón* (bighorn sheep), *gallina de la tierra* (grouse), *oso* (bear), *torque* (turkey), and *venao* (deer). *Bisonte* (bison) can be hunted, as well, but only with special permission and/or under special conditions. Introduced game animals hunted in the Fall include *arruí* (Barbary sheep), *cabra silvestre* (Persian ibex), and *órix* (oryx). Whether native or introduced, hunted animals are honored and respected for their sacrifice – whether through ritual and ceremony, ethical and responsible hunting practices, or some combination thereof.

ILLUSTRATION: NATASHA VASQUEZ

Traditionally, nothing hunted went to waste: the meat, of course, helped sustain the family through the long, cold, winter months or was sold for a tidy profit. Hides would be preserved or tanned to become bags, boots, clothing, glue, gloves, musical instruments, upholstery, wineskins, and many other useful objects. Gut and sinew became strings and cordage; bones became stock, hafts for weapons, bonemeal for the garden, or were carved into artwork. Horns became musical instruments, drinking vessels, or storage for gunpowder; antlers became buttons, dog chews, weapon hafts, carved art, jewelry, or just decoration. Before the introduction of harmful agricultural, industrial, and manufacturing pollutants made it unsafe, organ meats were delicacies that became a wide variety of traditional dishes. Much more goes to waste today, sadly, *pero asina es*.

Those who wish to hunt like their ancient ancestors may choose to use *el arco y fleche* (bow and arrow) and are granted first access to hunt. Those who wish to hunt like their more recent ancestors may choose to use an *avancarga* (muzzleloader) or *ballesta* (crossbow) and are granted second access to hunt. The last to receive permission to hunt are those who choose more recent weapons like *chotegones* (shotguns) and rifles. No matter what technology the hunter chooses, they begin their season with the ancient

rite of gathering all the necessary supplies for their trek and checking their weapons. Hunters make sure their bows are strong and the strings in good order, or that their guns are cleaned and well-oiled. Knives are sharpened; provisions are gathered; and gear is triple checked. Everything must be in good working order to ensure the hunter's safety and increase the chances of a successful hunt. Children are taught the ways to hunt properly and respectfully by their parents, grandparents, uncles, aunts, or other elder family members. It is a teaching process as old as humankind itself, linking the newest generations to the earliest toolmaking ancestors.

\*For anyone under the age of 18, he/she/they must possess a certification to hunt with a firearm by passing the state's hunter safety course.



ILLUSTRATION: NATASHA VASQUEZ





## Fall Recipes

Fall is one of the best times for food in New Mexico! The harvesting and feast days of the Fall means a lot of amazing comida. Blue corn atole, a type of corn mush, is the perfect thing to warm your bones on a chilly Fall morning; make it with chocolate and it becomes champurrado! Squash, fresh corn, and green chile often become calabacitas, a delicious vegetable soup often prepared with garlic and onions. Whether dried, raw, roasted, or powdered, the chile from the harvest is perfect for hundreds of dishes. One of the most iconic New Mexican dishes is green chile stew, the perfect thing to warm you and fill you up on a chilly evening.

# Tortillas

Recipe from Lily Padilla

## INGREDIENTS

- 2 Cups of Flour
- 1 Cup of Water
- 1 Teaspoon of Baking Powder
- ½ Teaspoon of Salt
- 1 Tablespoon of Manteca (lard)

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1** In large bowl, sift two cups of flour into the bowl. Add baking soda and salt to flour add mix together.
- 2** Add Manteca to the mix and gradually pour warm water into the bowl until it sticks. Knead the masa (dough) until it's smooth, make small size balls and let it sit for 15 minutes.
- 3** Once the masa has set, cover a surface with flour and take a ball of masa and roll it out until it turns into a flat circular shape.
- 4** Place a cast-iron pan onto the stove on medium heat and put rolled-out masa on the pan. Let it sit for 35 seconds or until it begins to rise and bubble to flip it or look at the bottom of the tortilla to see if there are brown spots and flip it. Continue to flip until it has risen and is perfectly browned. Set aside.



**Note:** You can use the same tortilla masa and make sopapillas. Make your masa and roll out into a circular shape. Cut into four triangular pieces and individually place into a pot of oil. Once it is golden brown and puffs up, take it out and lay it on a cloth or paper towel to absorb excess oil.

# Calabacitas

*Recipe from Natasha Vasquez*

This is a family favorite. Summer can bring a bounty of squash. The preferred squash for this recipe is the cousa squash. It tends to be light green, thick skinned, and great tasting.

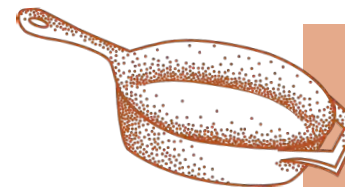
## INGREDIENTS

- Cousa Squash
- Yellow Sweet Canned Corn
- Roasted Green Chile

## INSTRUCTIONS

**1** Fry with butter till the color changes into a lighter hue. Then add an equal amount of yellow corn, chopped roasted and peeled green chile to taste and fry into a pan.

**2** Scoop up with a folded tortilla.



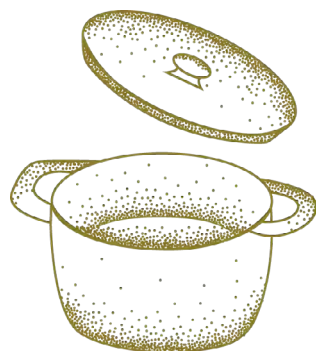
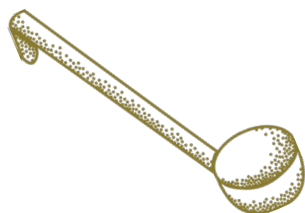
**Note:** One fist size cousa squash and one 8.7oz can of sweet corn makes one serving.

# Green Chile Stew

Recipe from Jesus Cuauhtémoc Villa

## INGREDIENTS:

- 1–4 Pounds Pork Shoulder or Sirloin (Cubed)  
*If kosher or halal, use chicken or beef instead; if vegetarian or vegan, use 2–4 cans green jackfruit*
- 3– 7 Cloves Garlic (Minced)
- 1 Large Yellow Onion (Sliced or Diced)
- 3–5 Large Potatoes (Cubed) – *can be skinned or left whole*
- 1– 3 Cups Roasted Green Chile (Chopped)
- 2–4 Tablespoon Olive Oil
- 1 Beer (preferably a light Mexican or New Mexican beer like Model Especial, Corona, Estrella Jalisco, Santa Fe Brewing 7K IPA or Bosque Brewing lager, etc.)
- 6–8 Cups of Water or Broth (Chicken or Vegetable)
- Salt to taste
- Optional: 1–4 Tablespoon of Wheat Flour or Cornstarch in equal amount of water (as a thickener)
- Optional: Approx. 1 Teaspoon each of Ground Black Pepper, Cumin, Thyme, and Oregano



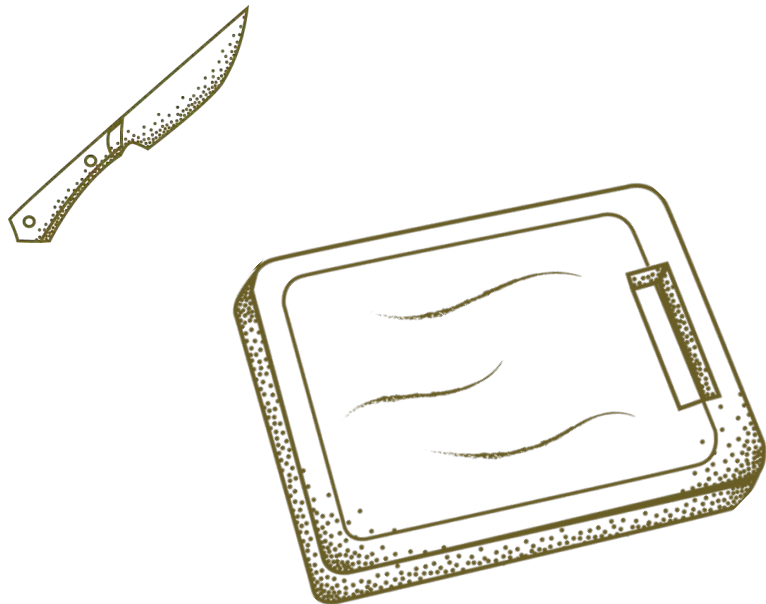
## INSTRUCTIONS:

- 1** In the bottom of a stew pot, use half the oil to cook the meat over medium heat until brown on all sides (if using jackfruit, cook until it begins to look like chunky pulled pork). I like to season the meat with ground black pepper, cumin, thyme, oregano, but this is optional. Once the meat or jackfruit is browned, remove from heat and set aside (I like to drain it on a paper towel).
- 2** Add the remaining oil to the pot and cook the onions over medium heat, stirring occasionally. Add the garlic right when the onions start to turn translucent and continue to stir occasionally; cook until the garlic is lightly browned and strongly fragrant (but be sure to remove from heat before the garlic burns!)
- 3** Once the garlic smells right and the onions are translucent, add the meat or jackfruit and the beer. Raise the temperature to high heat and bring the liquid to a boil for 1–3 minutes; this will cook off the alcohol, but leave the richness and flavor. Once the heavy vapor starts disappearing, you'll know the alcohol is cooked off; just don't let the liquid completely boil down, and stir occasionally to make sure nothing sticks to the bottom of the pot and burns!
- 4** Once the alcohol is cooked off, add your chile and water or broth. The liquid level should completely cover all the ingredients and fill the pot while leaving a few inches at the top to avoid everything boiling over. Bring the liquid to a rolling boil, then immediately bring the temperature to a simmer and cover the stew pot.

**5** Let the pot simmer for about 30 minutes to an hour, stirring occasionally. Once the meat or jackfruit is tender and comes apart pretty easily, add potatoes to the stew. The liquid should cover all ingredients and leave at least an inch to spare; feel free to add water to make the stew soupier. Cover the stew pot again and leave to simmer for about 10–15 minutes (or until the potatoes are soft, but not mushy).

**6** Taste and add salt as needed. *Optional:* if you want the stew to be thicker, mix equal parts water and flour or cornstarch (approx. 1–4 tbsp each) into a thick paste and add slowly add the mixture to the stew at the same time as your potatoes, stirring slowly.

**7** Serve in bowls with fluffy flour tortillas and enjoy!  
*¡Buen provecho!*



# Word Translations

**Otoño: Cosechas y Cazas:** Autumn: Harvest and Houses

**Llega el Frio:** The Cold is Coming

**Curando con Yerbitas:** Healing with Herbs

**Santos de los Animalitos:** The Animals' Saint

**La Vida, la Muerte, y el Monte:** Life, Death, and the Wild

**Álamos:** Cottonwood

**Alazán:** Elk

**Algodón:** Cotton Bark

**Añil:** Sunflower aka *girasol*

**Arruí:** Barbary Sheep

**Avancarga:** Muzzleloader

**Ballesta:** Crossbow

**Berrendo:** Pronghorn

**Bisonte:** Bison

**Borrego Cimarrón:** Bighorn Sheep

**Cabra Silvestre:** Persian ibex

**Calabacitas:** Squash

**Capulín:** Chokecherry Bark

**Cebadilla:** Green Gentian Root

**Chotegones:** Shotguns

**Curanderos:** Traditional healers

**El Arco y Fleche:** Bow and Arrow

**Enebro:** Juniper

**Equinácea:** Echinacea Root

**Espárragos:** Asparagus Root

**Frijoles:** Beans

**Gallina de la Tierra:** Grouse

**Maíz:** Maize

**Olmos:** Elms

**Oso:** Bear

**Órix:** Oryx

**Pino:** Pine

**Punche:** Tobacco aka *tabaco*

**San Francisco de Asís:** St. Francis of Assisi

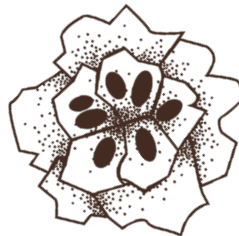
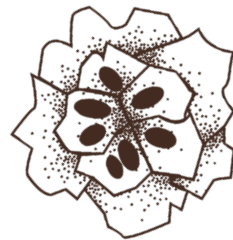
**Sicómoro:** Sycamore

**Torque:** Turkey

**Vara de San José:** Hollyhock Root

**Venao:** Deer

**Yerbas:** Herbs



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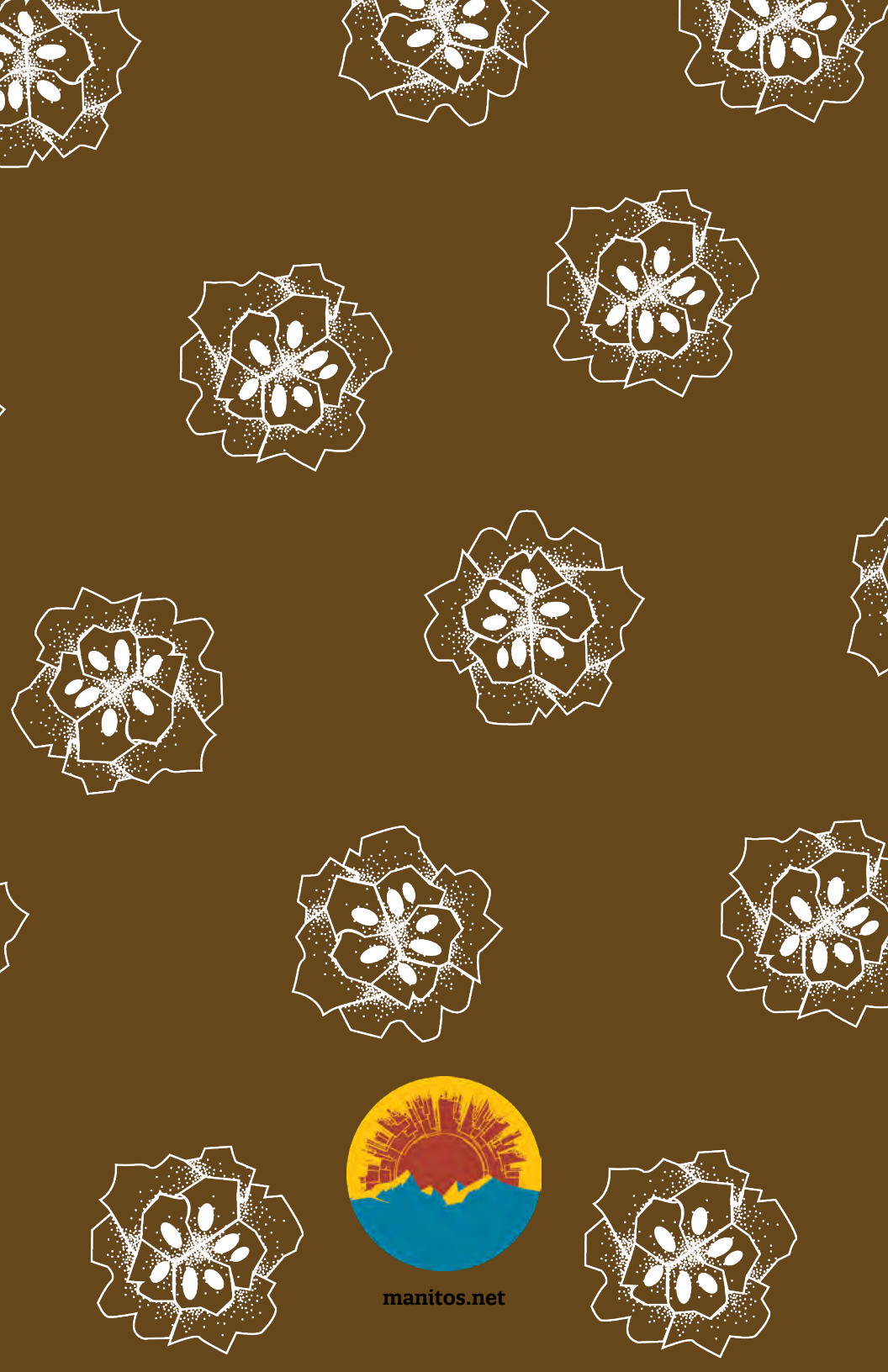
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