

**Brief bios of participants in the Q&A session**  
**after the screening of *The Michoacán File***

**14<sup>th</sup> Latin American and Spanish Film Week**

**Sunday September 22, 2024 / Cinecenta**

**Maria Elena Cuervo-Lorens** was born and raised in Mexico City, where she lived until she moved with her family to Canada in 1976. After experimenting for a few years with the ingredients available in Victoria, her husband encouraged her to organize and edit her life-long collection of recipes, many passed along from her mother, mother-in-law, and grandmother. Her first cookbook, “Maria Elena’s Mexican Cuisine,” came about.

Maria Elena was a member of the International Association of Culinary Professionals for several years attending master classes and workshops given by celebrities such as Julia Child and Jacques Pepin, among others. In fact, some of her recipes were included in Julia Child’s award-winning cookbook, “Cocina de la Familia”, published in the United States. She has also shared her knowledge of Mexican Cuisine in different cooking schools in Vancouver Island, Calgary, Vancouver and Toronto where she was invited to teach a Master class in the kitchen studio of the prestigious Scaramouche Restaurant. This event was covered by Elizabeth Baird, the Food Editor of Canadian Living Magazine and published in the Toronto Sun.

In 2005, Maria Elena’s second cookbook, “Mexican Culinary Treasures” was published in New York as part of the series of Cuisines Around the World, and received many positive reviews. This publication was reviewed by the Food Editor of the Times Colonist, EAT Magazine in Victoria, the Toronto Star, as well as other publications in the United States. Her collection of recipes ranges from the ancient and traditional to the trendy and current, but is always uncompromisingly authentic, which can be difficult at times!



**Chef Israel Alvarez Molina** comes from a background where Nixtamal Tortillas are an essential part of every meal. After working as Chef de Cuisine at Pujol in Mexico City, Chef Israel moved to Canada in 2008. When he arrived in Canada he found he deeply missed his vital connection to the cuisine of his heritage. The texture, aroma, flavour, and complexity of Nixtamal Tortillas was no longer available and along with it, his roots. While trying to build his new life as a Canadian Chef, Israel envisioned using his skills to bring the experience of Nixtamalized Corn to his new home. This vision lives at MAiiZ Nixtamal Tortilleria & Eatery.

