

**FEAST DAY CELEBRATION!**  
**May 12, 2012**

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Today it is feast and not famine around here. I will save famine for more ordinary days when neither Margaret nor I can think of anything to cook or eat, and they are often. As for what feast day this is, well, I have not thought up a name for it yet, but we are celebrating it (tomorrow) Mothers Day and the birthday of my daughter May, who turns thirty (Saturn Return). Anyway, we are gathering together to celebrate all of that and probably more.

And 'gathering' means that all four of my kids are coming, along with their partners, their kids (my grandkids), and some other close family friends. There will be 18 people in all, so far.

I am really looking forward to it and the various cars are already in route and converging here in the next hours. I am sure I will be overwhelmed at times and have to go and just check my email or take a nap. Grandfathers are allowed! Otherwise, it will be a wild ride around here for the next two days.

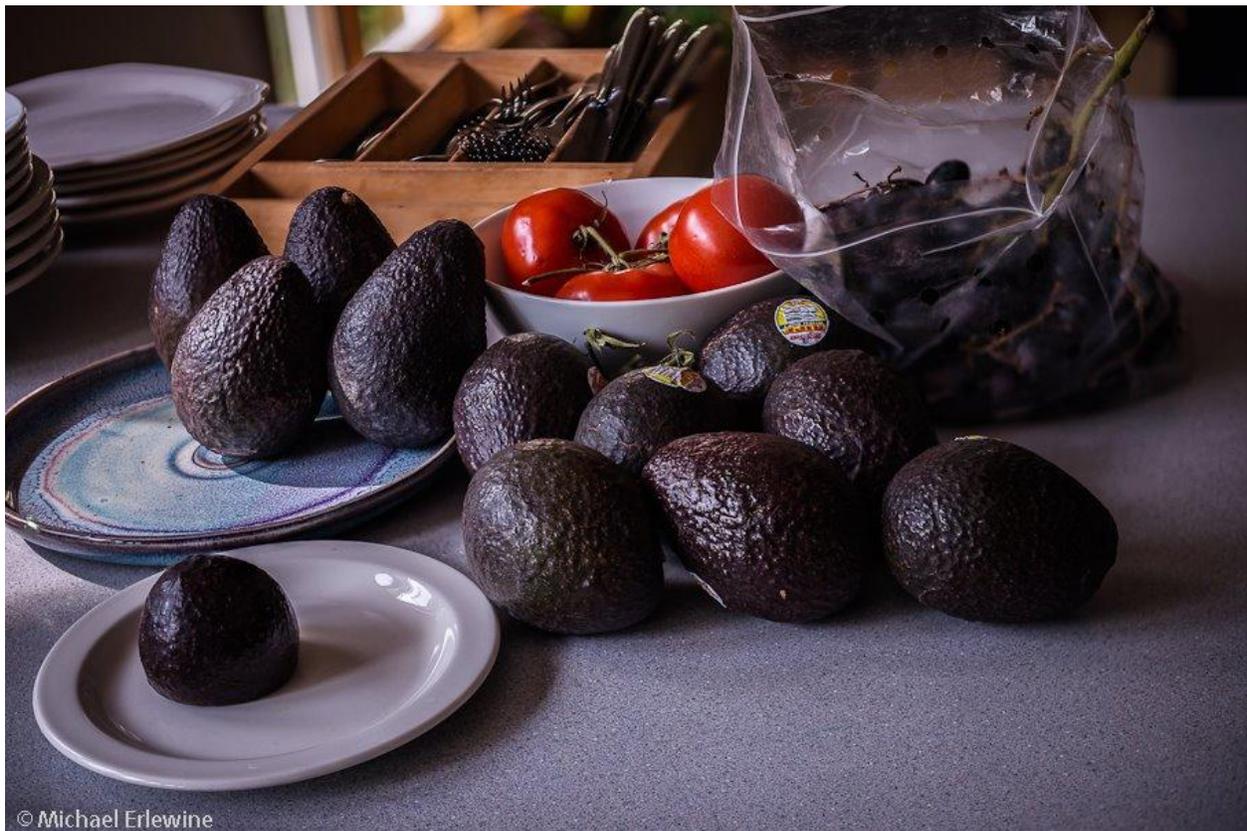
I include some photos I took of the preparations. Hope your days are good too!



## Pico de Gallo

Now I thought about not making Pico today, because it is a lot of work, but the enthusiasm of this bright sunny day overtook me and here it is. For some reason, I am the one who makes this in our family. It takes a while and is almost meditative. I say almost because I sometimes fall out of that state and just have to chop for a while.

Pico de Gallo, for me is just finely-chopped sweet onion, various-colored bell peppers, lots of chopped cilantro, some Hungarian hot peppers (not too much), and lots of Roma tomatoes. On top of that I squeeze a lot of fresh lime juice and stir well. I then let it sit at room temperature and steep in its own juices. Nothing like fresh salsa!



## Avocado

The guacamole chores also usually fall to me and you are looking at a flock of avocados that have been ripening on the counter for a couple of days. I usually just mash them up (be sure to get their belly buttons out), and mix them with finely chopped white onion, cilantro, and lime juice. I then add some good salsa to the mix and stir that in.

However, since I made Pico de Gallo today, I will just mix some of that in with the avocado mash and perhaps add some more lime juice. Voila!



## Brothy Beans

IMO no Mexican-style feast would be complete without brothy beans. Around our house we don't tend to eat refried beans, but always prefer them cooked in a big ole' pot with plenty of bean-water broth. We eat all kinds of beans, pinto, anasazi, great northern, and others. But my current favorite is black beans and be sure to cook 'em 'til they are soft.

These beans were soaked all night and I started cooking them around 2 AM this morning. They are well cooked by now and I did not burn them. My wife Margaret then adds just a little cumin, diced onion, and chopped cilantro and cooks them just a bit more.

This batch started with six cups of beans, so the pot they are in is BIG folks. That is a lot of beans! But with 18 or so people coming, we need them.



The Pico de Gallo ready to serve.



The finished guacamole with some Pico de Gallo mixed in.