

CULINARY TOUR NEW MEXICO

CLOSE TO HOME

Heritage Hotels offers virtual culinary tours of Land of Enchantment

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Heritage Inspirations has a new approach to its guided New Mexico excursions.

People's own homes are now the destination, and experiences have a culinary focus.

"With the pandemic, we went through so many innovations across 2020 and really trying to identify what we could possibly do strategically to engage our guests," said Angelisa Murray, CEO and inspired guide at Heritage Inspirations. "We have a really strong (list of) return guests that come and travel with us year after year. So when we went to the drawing board, we've actually done all sorts of things, but one specifically came from the inspiration of being sheltered at home and being in your home and finding ways to connect with other local regions — places we maybe wanted to travel but couldn't."

Heritage Hotels has created virtual culinary tours for 2021 and has teamed up with chefs Lois Ellen Frank and Walter Whitewater. Frank has spent more than 25 years documenting foods and the ways of life of Native American tribes in the Southwest. She received her Ph.D. in culinary anthropology from the University of New Mexico in 2011. Whitewater is from the Navajo Nation and began cooking professionally in 1992. He founded Red Mesa Cuisine, a Native American catering and food company, where he works alongside Frank, according to a news release.

This year's first tour, "Wellness & Renewal — How



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The significance in New Mexico of the "three sisters" — beans, corn and squash — is referenced in virtual culinary tours from Heritage Inspirations.

to Make Beans, Three Sisters Stew, No-Fry Frybread," starts at 3 p.m. Friday, Jan. 22.

"You know, the start of the year, it's always one of those beautiful things. You want to do something healthy for yourself, you want to learn something new, and you want to immerse yourself into your own ethos," Murray said. "And for a lot of people, I think, that's healthy eating, that's changing patterns that you have, and so we thought, what a great opportunity for us to share an Indigenous diet. ... You're learning about Indigenous ingredients that for us in New Mexico,

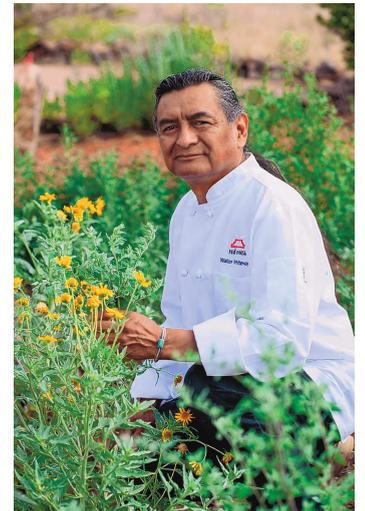
we as New Mexicans connect to, and I think cacao and chile and our three sisters are the essence of our Indigenous stories."

Each virtual tour includes a detailed one-hour demonstration, followed by a 15-minute question-and-answer period. A video link of the webinar and included recipes are sent to viewers after the event. Each tour is \$20. Tickets and information can be found at heritageinspirations.com/virtual-inspirations.

"Sometimes people are in different time zones and they can't reach us at that 3 o'clock hour, and that's totally fine," Murray said. "The only thing they miss out on is the opportunity to ask live questions, and they can ask us by email or they can contact chef."

Murray encourages people to watch the webinars and create the food courses at a later date using the downloaded recipes.

"It's really encouraged to go through the experience live not to go get the ingredients and so forth, although people can do that, but the intent is educational, and we really want people to grab a glass of wine or whatever it is and just enjoy the experience," Murray said. "We record this and follow up to send out the recipes. We inform people about the next event and just give any tidbits that chef (Frank) has given; sometimes she even revises her recipes and re-sends them. She's so dedicated to that. It's beautiful. And that way, people can continually enjoy these on demand again and again."



Chef Walter Whitewater helps bring virtual culinary tours offered by Heritage Inspirations to life.



Chef Lois Ellen Frank has partnered with Heritage Inspirations for virtual culinary tours.