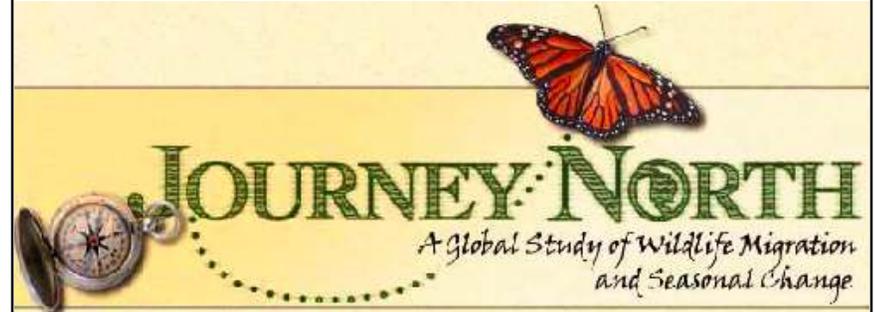




© 2007 Journey North  
<http://www.learner.org/jnorth/>  
Layout by Margaret Black



## Miguel the Breadmaker



Hello, I am Miguel, the breadmaker. After five long years of working as a supervisor in various companies, and not making quite enough money to support my family, I decided to start my own business. I can now earn more money, work with less stress, and have bread for my family everyday.

After putting on my **mandil** (apron) each morning, I think to myself, "quality first," and start to prepare 800 **pansitos** (little breads). Some days the shapes and styles change, but never the quality of my pansitos.



1

Unlike other larger **panaderias** (bread stores), I have very few utensils besides my table, a few small blades and patterns, a large **horno** (brick oven), and my wife Maltide, sons Fausto and Miguel, and daughter Jasmine. Yet someday I hope to have enough money to buy a mixer and mixing bowls.

### **Starting With The Dough**

Masa is the dough. I always start in the morning by 8:00 am making masa for the two types of bread: **pan blanco** and **pan dulce** (white bread and sweet bread). The only ingredients I use are **harina de trigo** (wheat flour), **azucar** (sugar), **levadura** (yeast), **carbonato** (baking soda), **huevos** (eggs), **manteca** (vegetable shortening), and **mantiquilla** (butter).



2

I first prepare the topping for the batches of pan dulce. I measure the manteca, and set it on the clean table. Then I measure the azucar, harina, and **cocoa** (cocoa powder) and set all these on top of the manteca.



I pour a few cups of **agua** (water) over these ingredients and mix it all with my hands. This creates what is called the pasta (topping). I then make balls of this pasta and put them aside until I have prepared and cut out the dough for the pan dulce.

3



I now combine the same ingredients for pan dulce minus the manteca, shape the dough and put it all on separate **ojas** (metal baking sheets).



*Applying the pasta on top of pan dulce.*

4

While these are rising, I make the dough for pan blanco which does not contain the azucar. This dough I will also shape and lay on the shelves to rise after I knead it for at least 20 minutes.



**Masar** (to knead) is the most tiring after the whole day.



Jasmine has her specialty. She prepares the batter to make **pancas** (muffins) by measuring and mixing with her clean hands some eggs, orange peels, sugar flour, baking soda, and oil.



### Firing Up the Oven

When I make the dough for the first batch, I start the fire in the horno as it takes at least three hours for it to get really hot. The horno is made out of **adobe** (a mixture of water and soil and pine needles). A mold is formed out of wood, this adobe is poured into this oval structure mold and then partially dried in the sun for 15 days. After this we build on top of it three layers at a time, thus allowing the structure to gradually dry and form without caving inwards. We have to wait an entire month before using the

horno. Since my father was also a **pandero** (breadmaker) he has helped with the construction of this horno.



### **The Baking Sheets Are Ready!**

By 3:30 p.m. the masa is ready to bake. The masa is put onto long thin boards and lined up in the horno. After I push the fire to one side, I first put in the pan dulce, taking only about 10 to 15 minutes to bake.



I pull out the finished bread and slide the pieces off onto the table to cool, meanwhile I have Miguel Jr. replace the finished bread with the remaining masa of pan blanco and the muffins. This takes a little longer to bake, perhaps 20 minutes.



The bread needs to cool for at least a half hour before Miguel Jr. helps me load up everything into "Laura". Laura is my red 1969 Volkswagon Van. She is old, but very reliable and everyone in Anganguero recognizes her for "my fresh, quality bread"!



Around 5:30 p.m. I start my route in which I arrive to my regular customers. These are private homes and some restaurants. I honk my **claxton** (horn) and Miguel Jr. knocks on their door.

My customers are welcome to enter the van and make their selections, usually purchasing 10 to 20 pansitos. When I turn Laura in for the night, I then look forward to relaxing by playing pool with close friends.

