



Heritage Project

Hello! I am Vanessa Ruppert

(Vanessa helps us with graphic design on some Jungle Farm projects and we love working with her! She's photographed with her husband, Steven, who is a Machinist in Innisfail.)



Vanessa was born in Guatemala and moved to Innisfail 17 years ago, after a long distance romance turned into marriage! We are glad Steven brought her home to us - Vanessa is a caring and engaged part of our community, and she has shared her enthusiasm on a number of Jungle Farm projects over the years. We are always happy to hear her tales from Guatemala.

"We spend a lot of time in the kitchen back home, both to prepare the food and to enjoy it together. Meals are not rushed," said Vanessa. "That was a big adjustment for me - people rushing through a half hour meal at lunch! That's more like snack time. The midday meal is the largest of the day in Guatemala, so everyone goes home to prepare and share a meal. Sometimes we even have a little siesta! It's spring weather all year there too, so there are lots of fruits and vegetables every day. The weather was also an adjustment, but I love it here!

"I have been proud of my heritage ever since I can remember. My Grandpa from my mom's side was the founder of the Labor Courts and the creator of the Labor Code in Guatemala back when the international companies would pay pennies to hard workers in the plantain and sugarcane fields. He was a lawyer and political activist, he held various government, academic and political positions. But he was mostly known because he fought all his life for justice and fair salaries for the most vulnerable people in Guatemala. He is considered a national hero, and you can see his portrait in random houses around Guatemala."

Vanessa has a teaching degree and worked for three years with kindergarteners. She also studied Graphic Design, and now combines both interests by providing a popular dayhome and doing design contracts for businesses and organizations in the area.

Vanessa's Recipe - Huevos Rancheros

"This 'scramble' combines many flavours of Guatemalan cuisine and are very popular in my home country. It is a perfect breakfast!"

- 4 eggs
- 3 red tomatoes
- 1 white onion
- Salt
- Oil
- 1 cup black beans
- Wash the beans well, then place them in a pot with water and cook according to package directions. Add a little salt and strain the water when thoroughly cooked.
- Cut tomatoes and onion into small pieces.
- Heat a small amount of oil in a pan over medium heat. Add the onion and tomato, stir occasionally for five minutes.
- Add salt and pepper to taste. Move mixture to a separate container.
- In the same pan, add a bit more oil and add the eggs without breaking the yolk. Cook until the egg white is to your liking.
- Serve them on a deep plate and cover them with the sauce. Finally, add the beans to the plate. Enjoy!

Give this easy meal a special touch by adding a little avocado or sour cream, and fresh tortillas, to your plate!