La Chica rubia finds the true meaning of “other”

I’m not used to standing out. I’m of average height, and I have average dirty-blond hair, an average complexion and average height, and I have average dirty-blond hair, an average complexion and average height.

This was apparent the moment I set foot in Mexico City that first week and navigated the throngs of travelers to Benito Juárez International Airport. As I awaited my luggage after the flight, I searched through the throngs of travelers to find the one I resembled the most in terms of other contributors’ shifting gears, the way their eyes quickly flitted away if I walked back. It isn’t a trait for standing out in such a scenario—everyone is the same, it’s like I’d be different. This is what it’s like to be “other.”

Being an Other has made me realize in ways I hadn’t noticed before how much we all resemble one another, how much we all share a commonality. Of course, we have our differences, but we all share a commonality.

When I started college, I didn’t think I was going to fit right in with the other international students. After all, I came here to learn to immerse myself and become a fully-functional member of Mexican society, not an American groupie. But on orientation day, they gave me an exchange student group, and the orientation also became my new best friends. I’ve never had a group of 25 friends in another country! They’re not all Mexican in origin, and I don’t think I’ve ever had a friend group of a community shared language. We don’t belong together, but they belong to us. It’s amazing what we can find in common at the various levels of Spanish fluency and proficiency. It’s amazing how much we can learn from each other, and how much we can teach each other.

After all, I came here to immerse myself and become a fully-functional member of Mexican society, not an exchange student group. But on orientation day, they found me a new best friend.

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Cooking with Julia: Buffalo Wing Dip

Ingredients:
- 2 lb. blocks of cream cheese
- 1/4 to 1/2 cup buffalo wing sauce (for bleu cheese dressing)
- 3 whole chicken breasts, cooked and shredded
- 16 oz. buffalo wings sauce (Frank’s brand recommended)
- 3 cups shredded cheddar cheese

Directions:
1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees.
2. Combine cream cheese and buffalo wing sauce in a pot over medium-low heat. Spread mixture evenly across the bottom of a 13x9-inch baking pan.
3. Combine the shredded chicken breast and the buffalo wing sauce. Layer chicken mixtures on top of cream cheese layer in pan.
4. Sprinkle cheddar cheese over the top of chicken. Bake in 375-degree oven for 25 minutes. Serve with tortilla chips, celery, carrots or crackers.

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