



LUCIA
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Hot tamale."

Many Latinas are familiar with this phrase. Even more familiar to our ears is "spicy".

I understand many Latinas are from countries with vibrant, delicious and well-seasoned foods, but what I have trouble understanding is at what point it became alright to describe us as such.

Similar to the "angry black woman" stereotype, Latinas are often pinned as sexual firebrands.

Words used to describe Latinas such as "spicy", "sizzling" or "flaming hot" reduce Latinas to food that is craved, drooled over, obtained, devoured and then flushed away.

In describing us the way one would describe a Triple Steak Burrito from Taco Bell, one is reducing us to less than human, a mere object for consumption.

News flash: we are not yours to consume.

This dehumanization of Latinas comes hand in hand with our oversexualization in American culture.

husband, Jay (Ed O'Neill).

This oversexualization of Latinas is harmful for more reasons than one. It is undoubtedly dehumanizing, but it also denies many Latinas a sense of

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Stereotypes of Latinas are often perpetuated by the media, labeling Latinas as "hot tamales", curvy and provocative, almost always emblematic of sex appeal.

Examples of this date back to the 1920s, when Dolores del Río played roles of an exotic and passionate lover, to now, as Sofia Vergara's character Gloria on "Modern Family" is representative of a stereotypical Latina who wears provocative, skin-tight clothing and is a fantasy trophy wife to her older

ethnic identity based on their physical appearance or sexual attractiveness.

How am I supposed to feel Latina enough when I am told my only worth comes from curves or sex appeal?

I recall an interaction I had with a classmate. In revealing to him that I am Latina, his response was along the lines of "Oh, that explains your hot body."

I was appalled.

One might say I should be flattered he found my body to be attractive, but it felt wrong, as if I was suddenly just my body, just a piece of meat, just something to consume.

I reject that idea.

Latinas are stereotyped, sexualized and dehumanized, but we are strong, beautiful, intelligent, kind and much more complex than a simple label.

I may be a lot of things, but I will never be your spicy Latina. My curves are not for your eyes to gaze upon. My ethnicity is not for your sexual satisfaction. My identity is not a food group category.

And I will most certainly not be consumed by you.



Left: ALL-IN-ONE BUFFET: A Latina girl gazes at a menu that portrays Latinas as meals for consumption, matched with price tags. Latina women are often compared to food and dehumanized based on their appearance or stereotypes that society upholds about them.

Cartoon by Ashley Lawrence