

Tortilla Soup

USA 2001

Director
Maria Ripoll
Producer
John Bard Manulis
Screenplay
Ramón Menéndez
Tom Musca
Vera Blasi
Based on a screenplay by
Wang Hui-Ling
Ang Lee
James Schamus
Director of Photography
Xavier Pérez Grobet
Editor
Andy Blumenthal
Production Designer
Alicia MacCarone
Music
Bill Conti

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LLC/Starz Encore Group
LLC

Production Companies
Samuel Goldwyn Films
presents in association
with Starz Encore
Entertainment a Samuel
Goldwyn Films
production
Executive Producer
Samuel Goldwyn Jr
Co-producer
Lulu Zezza
Associate Producer
Meyer Gottlieb
**Executive in Charge of
Production for Starz
Encore**
Paige Orloff
Production Supervisor
Miriam Jacobs
Production Co-ordinators
Joel Peterson
Stacy Parker
Additional:
Nina Womack
Unit Production Manager
Lisa Howard
Location Managers
Peter Costelli
Additional:
John Winston
Kojo Lewis
**Post-production
Supervisor**
Lulu Zezza
Post Picture Supervisor
Emanuel Pereira
Post-production Services
The Digital Difference
Kevin Hearst
Chris Miller
Dee Dee Davis
Digital Post-production
Complete Post
**Food/Additional
Photography Unit Director**
Lulu Zezza
Assistant Directors
Joel Morales
Lori Mellman
Jonathan Hennessey
Eric Jones
Script Supervisors
Sharon Cingle
Additional:
Linda Kwan
Casting
Elizabeth Marx
US Additional:
Junie Lowry Johnson
Libby Goldstein
Mexico City Additional:
Claudia Becker
**Food/Additional
Photography Unit Director
of Photography**
Mariana Sánchez de
Antunano
Camera Operator
Mariana Sánchez de
Antunano
Steadicam Operators
Craig Fikse
Gary Camp
**Special Effects
Co-ordinator**
Frank Ceglia
On-line Editor
Robert Douglas

Additional On-line Editor
Temps
Glenn Rose
Art Director
John Mott
Set Decorator
Julieann Getman
Costume Designer
Ileane Meltzer
Wardrobe Supervisor
Joseph Cigliano
Key Make-up Artist
Rosie Duprat Fort
**Additional Key Make-up/
Hairstylist**
Vera Zay
Key Hairstylist
Lynda Walker
Main Title Design
Alessandro Zezza
Film Recording/Titling
CFI Imaging Group
Film
Recording/Compositing
Steve Fagerquist
Music Supervisor
Julianne Jordan
Music Editor
Chris McGeary
Soundtrack
"Sem contencao", "Sem
contencao (One Rascal
Remix)" – Bebel Gilberto;
"Perhaps, Perhaps,
Perhaps" – (1) Doris Day,
(2) Lila Downs; "Cuchi-
Cuchi", "Si estuvieras
aquí" – Los Amigos
Invisibles; "Les Portes du
Souvenir" – Les Nubiens;
"A bailar" – Patricio
Castillo; "Si en un final"
– Eliades Ochoa;
"Lágrimas negras" –
Cuba LA; "Outro lado" –
Zuco 103; "Call Waiting"
– Zap Mama; "La
verdolaga" – P18;
"Amado mio" – Pink
Martini; "Hoy me voy" –
Sergent García; "La
pluma" – Bloque
Production Sound Mixers
Bill Flick
Additional:
Bill Fiege
Sound Utility
Don Nelson
Recordists
Ryan Davis
Todd Morrissey
Re-recording Mixers
Stan Kastner
Robbie Bartholomew
Re-recording Mixer Temps
Lance Krive
Supervising Sound Editor
Sandy Gendler
Sound Conformists
Nancy Nugent
Clare Freeman
Mark Lanza
Dialogue Editors
Scott G. Haller
Kira
Sound Effects Editor
Brad North
Group Mixer
Warren Dewey
Loop Group
ADR Voice Services
Burton Sharp
ADR
Mixers:
Sam Aronson
Steve Nafshun
Foley
Supervisor:
Kris Garfield
Artists:
Joni Rowe
Sean Rowe
Laura Macias
Gregg Barbanell
Mixer:
Shawn Kennelly
Editor:
Kris Garfield
**Food/Menus
Created/Designed by**
Mary Sue Milliken
Susan Feniger

**On-screen Food
Provided by**
Border Grill/Ciudad
Restaurants LA
On-set Chef
Monique King
Food Stylists
Christian Gomez
Karen Gillingham
Food Writer
Helene Siegle
Animal Wrangler
PHD Animals
Kathryn Segura

Cast
Hector Elizondo
Martin Naranjo
Jacqueline Obradors
Carmen Naranjo
Tamara Mello
Maribel Naranjo
Paul Rodriguez
Orlando
Constance Marie
Yolanda
Joel Joan
Antonio Urgell
Nikolai Kinski
Andy
Julio Oscar Mechoso
Gómez
Elizabeth Peña
Letitia Naranjo
Raquel Welch
Hortensia

Jade Herrera
Eden
Troy Ruptash
hairstresser
Ken Marino
Jeff
Marisabel García
April
Louis Crugnali
catering assistant
Ulysses Cuadra
snide student
Mark de la Cruz
Eli Russell Linnetz
April's classmates
Stoney Westmoreland
baseball umpire
Karen Dyer
Jeff's girlfriend

Certificate
PG
Distributor
Optimum Releasing
9,303 feet
103 minutes 22 seconds

**Dolby Digital
In Colour**

Los Angeles, the present. Martin Naranjo is a Mexican-American widower and gourmet cook whose senses are failing him. He is increasingly estranged from his three grown-up daughters, still living at home: Letitia, a born-again Christian and schoolteacher; Carmen, who works in business but has an unfulfilled hankering to be a chef; and Maribel, a soon-to-be college freshman distracted by handsome Brazilian exchange student Andy. Saturdays see the weekly ritual of Martin's elaborate family meal. At one of these Carmen unexpectedly announces she is to move to her own flat, much to her father's disapproval.

Martin is introduced to Hortensia, a self-proclaimed expert in seduction, by her daughter, divorcee Yolanda, who is bringing up her young girl April. Hortensia has her eyes set on Martin. Letitia develops a crush on new school coach Orlando; anonymous love letters seem to confirm his mutual feelings. At the Saturday meal Carmen announces she is to move to Barcelona for a new job. Disappointed, Martin takes comfort in caring for April by secretly preparing her school lunches. The following Saturday Maribel, accompanied by Andy, announces she is deferring college for a year and leaves to set up house with her new beau. Letitia publicly displays her love for Orlando, only to find out the love letters were written by her students; Orlando, however, discovers his unexpected feelings for Letitia. Next Saturday Letitia announces she and Orlando have wed. Unhappy, Maribel leaves Andy for home. Meanwhile Martin's former partner and best friend dies. Carmen abandons her plans to move to Spain. At the next family meal Martin tells his daughters that he is to marry Yolanda, not Hortensia as expected. Some time later, the family, including a reunited Maribel and Andy, gather at Carmen's new restaurant, to learn that Yolanda, now married to Martin, is expecting a baby girl.

Instantly forgettable, *Tortilla Soup* is a Latino-American cover version of Ang Lee's 1994 domestic comedy *Eat Drink Man Woman*. The idea of remaking Lee's successful film – about an ageing gourmet cook and widower coping with his three very different daughters' approach to love and life – is not altogether misguided, and in fact *Tortilla Soup* doggedly follows the original almost scene by scene. The acting is uniformly good – with the exception of Raquel Welch's cartoonish performance as the vampire-like widow Hortensia – and the passable level of watchability owes a lot to Hector Elizondo's assured performance as the firm but benevolent patriarch Martin Naranjo. But the plodding, uninspired direction of Maria Ripoll, whose last film was the magic-realist-tinged, London-set romantic comedy *If Only*, squanders her source material's rich potential.

Whereas Lee's family was caught between the demands of modernity and a more ingrained set of traditional values at play in present-day Taipei, Ripoll's family seems to exist in a vacuum; the film only thrives when the action returns to Martin's lushly colourful, hacienda-like home, all south-of-the-border crockery and terracotta tiles. As with a studio-bound sitcom, 'home' feels excessively art-directed and overly stagey; yet, paradoxically, it is the only setting where the artificial dialogue and flat cast of characters – each assigned their own one-line, life-consuming problems – can be comfortably played out. One particularly unnecessary scene, in which Welch seemingly rehearses one of her fitness videos by performing toe-touches for unwilling jogging partner Martin, accentuates the movie's made-for-television feel.

Eat Drink Man Woman may not have been flawless – the characters were a bit blank emotionally, though not aggressively overstated as they are in this remake – but Lee brought a thoughtful view of family politics to the big screen; as he said about the film: "Sometimes the things children need to hear most are the things that parents find hardest to say, and vice versa. When that happens, we resort to ritual." This perspicacity is altogether absent from Ripoll's film, whose many scenes of food preparation – admittedly lovingly done – seem bent only on cashing in on the current vogue for Southern California Latino culture and the Anthony Bourdain-inspired interest in all things culinary.

One of the most memorable moments in *Eat Drink Man Woman* is its outrageously unexpected tornado-twist of a finale, which manages to surprise and delight its movie audience almost as much as the dumbstruck characters on screen. Audiences who were wrongfooted by Lee's movie will know exactly what to expect from this film's identical ending; and those who don't are bound to be put off by Welch's achingly overacted and unfunny fainting spell. The result is unlikely to raise a bump in your memory; they should have called it *Tortilla Flat*.

Gilda Williams