

Words with [š] in the Sandoval dictionary: Cuexte

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This interesting word is apparently an early borrowing from Nahuatl. Sandoval documents it as follows:

*CUEXTE, adj. = Muy bien molido, fino suave. "La masa de las tortillas y de los tamales debe ser siempre muy **cuexte*". El vocablo viene del mexicano *cotztl* = suave, fino; o de *cuechoa* = moler finamente. *Cuchite*, en Costa Rica.

*CUEXTEAR = Moler bien el maíz cocido del cual se hacen las tortillas, Hacer **cuexte* la masa de las tortillas. *Huestear*, en Honduras.

Both editions of Armas cite the word, spelled *cueshte*, and give the definition as "Se dice de la masa de maíz de muy fina consistencia." Rubio provides two spellings, and an entertaining metaphor that is otherwise unattested.

Cuexte
Cueste.

Cueste
Masa refinada (especialmente la de maíz). || "Hablar cueste": expresarse con palabras escogidas o de uso poco común.

The *Diccionario de la Real Academia* (DRAE) confirms the geographic presence of this word – and the palatal fricative pronunciation – beyond Guatemala, citing *cueshte* for El Salvador and *hueste* for Honduras, always with the meaning 'ground very fine' and preferentially applied to the dough, or *masa*, made from ground corn. In addition, the DRAE also documents the Nahuatl etymology, deriving the word from cuechtic 'muy machacado, molido, amasado.'

An Analytical Dictionary of Nahuatl, by Frances Karttunen (1983, UTexas Press) includes an entry for CUĒCHTIC 'something ground fine, powdered,' which is sourced to the 1571 *Vocabulario en lengua castellana y mexicana y mexicana y castellana* of Fray Alonso de Molina. Interestingly, we have a clear etymology for the palatal fricative pronunciation that derives from a palatal affricate, which was distinct from the palatal fricative in Nahuatl.