

Life in the Land of Multiple Choice



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After a hectic day of scooting around Los Angeles with my mother, pulling together details for my sister's looming wedding day, we decided to relax with a margarita and Mexican food at Pancho's, a Manhattan Beach favorite. Living in Berlin I have little opportunity to enjoy anything resembling authentic Mexicali so while in California I jump at any chance I have. Fortunately there are lots of restaurants here to choose from when it comes to tasty Tostadas and Pancho's, with their generous portions and awesome cocktails, enjoys top billing in the region.

Taking a seat at the packed bar while we waited for our table, my mother whispered to me that I should check out the party behind us. I turned surreptitiously on my stool to find six Britney Spears look-alikes chirping cheerfully about their afternoon at the beach. Each one wore a minor variation of the other girlfriends' wardrobes, featuring the same flouncy miniskirt and rushed tank top that I have noticed in many of the shop windows here, all interchangeably accented with long streaked blonde mane and thick black mascara. The neighboring table offered six look-alike guys sporting baseball caps, loose fitting t-shirts and sideways glances, unsure whether to watch the girls or the baseball game on the giant projection screen. It seemed to me a match made in heaven, or the next best thing, Manhattan Beach.

My head was still reeling from the first trip through a US grocery store in nearly 2 years that I had taken earlier that afternoon. I had been overwhelmed by the towers of cereal boxes in countless varieties, aisle upon aisle of brightly packaged foods all screaming for attention - so different than my grocery experiences in East Berlin. With this in mind I reflected on how much alike the members of these two parties appeared and it struck me... in the land of multiple choice, how come so much is the same?