

Clayton AAUW Gourmet Travelers Mexican Dinner

Saturday May 9, 6:30 p.m. at the Totman's

Info on Mexico and Mexican cuisine from Wikipedia, recipes from Rick Bayless

Menu:

- Appetizer: 1-Mango Guacamole (Totman),
- 2-Garlicky Black Pepper Tortilla Chips (Totman), (Totopos al Ajo con Pimienta Negra),
- 3-Pico de Gallo (Totman),
- 4-Dox Equis Light beer (green box) (Krane),
- Soup Course: 5-Emerald Corn Chowder with Roasted Tomatillos and Poblano (Caspar)
- First course: 6-Acapulco-Style Shrimp Cocktail (Coctel de Camarones, estilo Acapulco) (Bates)
- Main course: 7-Tamales (Krane),
- 8-Enchiladas-chicken (Bever),
- 9-Fish Tacos, (Boyd),
- 10-Chili Rellano (Hayes),
- 11-Refried beans, (Lane),
- 12-Mexican rice (Kelson),
- Dessert: 13-Mexican Flourless Chocolate Cake (Wolfe),
- 14-Coffee (Totman)

About Mexico

The United Mexican States (Spanish: Estados Unidos Mexicanos, commonly known as Mexico (Spanish: México IPA: [ˈmexiko]), is a federal constitutional republic in North America. It is bordered on the north by the United States; on the south and west by the Pacific Ocean; on the southeast by Guatemala, Belize, and the Caribbean Sea; and on the east by the Gulf of Mexico. Covering almost 2 million square kilometres, Mexico is the fifth-largest country in the Americas by total area and the 14th largest independent nation in the world. With an estimated population of 109 million, it is the 11th most populous country. Mexico is a federation comprising thirty-one states and a Federal District, the capital city.



In the Pre-Columbian era complex cultures began to form in Mesoamerica. Many matured into advanced civilizations such as the Olmec, the Toltec, the Teotihuacan, the Maya and the Aztec before the first contact with Europeans. Mexico became a colony of Spain from the landing of Hernán Cortés in 1521 until its independence in 1821. The post-independence period was characterized by economic instability, territorial secession and civil war, including foreign intervention, two empires and two long domestic dictatorships. The latter led to the Mexican Revolution in 1910, which culminated with the promulgation of the 1917 Constitution and the emergence of the country's current political system. Elections held in July 2000 marked the first time that an opposition party won the presidency from the Institutional Revolutionary Party (Spanish: Partido Revolucionario Institucional, PRI).



As a regional power and the only Latin American member of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) since 1994, Mexico is firmly established as an upper middle-income country,

considered as a newly industrialized country and has the 11th largest economy in the world by GDP by purchasing power parity. The economy is strongly linked to those of its North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) partners. Despite being considered an emerging power, the uneven income distribution and the increase in insecurity are issues of concern.

Facts: Capital (and largest city) Mexico City; Official languages None at federal level: Spanish (de facto) National language Spanish, and 62 Indigenous Amerindian languages, Demonym Mexican. They have a Government Federal presidential republic and the President is Felipe Calderón; The Independence from Spain was declared November 6, 1813, Recognized September 27, 1821, and Observed September 16, 1810. The population in mid-2008 is an estimate of 109,955,400, the Density is 55/km², 142/sq mi.

The currency is the Peso (MXN) and they drives on the right, the Internet TLD is .mx, and the Calling code is 52.

Mexican cuisine

Mexican cuisine is a style of food that originated in Mexico. Some dishes have a Spanish or Middle Eastern influence. Mexican cuisine is known for its varied flavors, colorful decoration, and variety of spices and ingredients, many of which are native to the country.

When conquistadores arrived in the Aztec capital Tenochtitlan (now Mexico City), they found that the people's diet consisted largely of corn-based dishes with chiles and herbs, usually complemented with beans and tomatoes or nopales. The conquistadores eventually combined their imported diet of rice, beef, pork, chicken, wine, garlic and onions with the native indigenous foods of pre-Columbian Mexico, including chocolate, maize, huitlacoche, tomato, vanilla, avocado, guava, papaya, sapote, mamey, pineapple, soursop, jicama, chile pepper, beans, squash, sweet potato, peanut, achiote, turkey and a local variety of fish.



Corn is its traditional staple grain, but today, rice is equally important and Mexico's rice harvest is abundant. According to food writer Karen Hursh Graber, the initial introduction of rice to Spain from North Africa in the 4th Century led to the Spanish introduction of rice into Mexico at the port of Veracruz in the 1520s. This, Graber says, created one of the earliest instances of the world's greatest fusion cuisines.[1]

In Pueblos or villages, there are also more exotic dishes, cooked in the Aztec or Mayan style (known as comida prehispánica) with ingredients ranging from iguana to rattlesnake, deer, spider monkey, grasshoppers, ant eggs, and other kinds of insects.

Regional cuisine The word "chocolate" originates in Mexico's Aztec cuisine, derived from the Nahuatl word xocolatl.

Chocolate was first drunk rather than eaten. Mexican food varies by region, because of local climate and geography and ethnic differences among the indigenous inhabitants and because these different populations were influenced by the Spaniards in



varying degrees. The north of Mexico is known for its beef, goat and ostrich production and meat dishes, in particular the well-known Arrachera cut.

Central Mexico's cuisine is largely made up of influences from the rest of the country, but also has its authentic, such as barbacoa, pozole, menudo and carnitas. Southeastern Mexico, on the other hand, is known for its spicy vegetable and chicken-based dishes. The cuisine of Southeastern Mexico also has quite a bit of Caribbean influence, given its geographical location. Seafood is commonly prepared in the states that border the Pacific Ocean or the Gulf of Mexico, the latter having a famous reputation for its fish dishes, a la veracruzana.

In modern times, other cuisines of the world have become very popular in Mexico, thus adopting a Mexican fusion. For example, sushi in Mexico is often made with a variety of sauces based on mango or tamarind, and very often served with serrano-chili blended soy sauce, or complimented with habanero and chipotle peppers.

Pico de Gallo

(means rooster's beak) Ingredients: ripe tomato, onion, cilantro, lime juice, chili serrano (or chili jalapeno). Wash the ingredients well, especially the cilantro. Dice the tomato. The general size of the pieces is important--not too big and not too small is the secret. Too small is mushy, and too big just doesn't feel as good as it's being eaten. Dice the onion and drop it in. Note that the pieces are a little smaller than the tomato pieces. Dice the chili and drop it in. Notice that the chili is diced even finer than the onion. Dice the cilantro and add it to the mix. Squeeze in plenty of lime juice. (Lemon juice is okay.) Add salt to taste. A little more than half a teaspoon is a good place to start. Stir it up, and enjoy!

Mango Guacamole

Makes about 2.5 cups

Ingredients:

3 large ripe avocados

1/2 small red onion, diced

1/2 to 1 fresh serrano chile, seeded and finely chopped

2 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro, plus a few leaves for garnish

About 2 tablespoons fresh lime juice

1 medium ripe mango, peeled, flesh cut from the pit and diced

Salt

Directions:

1. Cut the avocados in half, running your knife around the pit from stem to blossom end and back up again. Twist the halves in opposite directions to free the pit, and pull the halves apart. Dislodge the pit, then scoop the avocado flesh into a large bowl. Coarsely mash the



avocado with a large fork or potato masher. Rinse the onion under cold water, shake off the excess water, then add it to the avocado along with the serrano, cilantro and lime juice.

2. Mix in 2/3 of the diced mango. Taste and season with salt. If not using immediately, cover with plastic wrap pressed directly on the surface of the guacamole and refrigerate – preferably for no more than a few hours.

3. When you're ready to serve, scoop guacamole into a serving bowl and garnish with the remaining diced mango and cilantro sprigs. Serve with tortilla chips, slices of cucumber or jícama.

Garlicky Black Pepper Tortilla Chips (Totopos al Ajo con Pimienta Negra)

Makes enough chips for 8 to 9 as a snack

Ingredients

½ cup light vegetable oil (grapeseed oil works beautifully here)

6 large garlic cloves, peeled and finely chopped or pressed through a garlic press

½ teaspoon fresh black pepper, plus more for sprinkling on the chips

1 9- or 10-ounce bag tortilla chips (preferably the thicker, home-style)

Directions:

Heat the oven to 325 degrees and position the rack in the middle. In a small saucepan, combine the vegetable oil, garlic and pepper. Set over medium-low heat and cook until the garlic browns slightly, about 10 minutes. Remove from the heat.

Strain the mixture through a fine-mesh strainer into a small bowl. Place the chips in a large bowl. Use a brush to “paint” the oil onto the chips. (Store the leftover oil in a sealed container and use it for salad dressings or on potatoes destined for roasting.) Spread the chips onto a rimmed baking sheet. Bake the chips until hot and aromatic, about 10 minutes. Sprinkle with fresh pepper and scoop into a serving bowl or basket.

Emerald Corn Chowder with Roasted Tomatillos and Poblano

Recipe from Salsas That Cook, Makes about 6 cups, enough for 4 to 6 The roasty flavors of this zesty soup are wonderfully enriched with the sweet corniness of masa, the dough that's used for making corn tortillas. Whether you use the easily accessible dehydrated masa harina or the fresh dough available from tortilla factories, you'll love the complex flavors. (No masa at all? Thicken the soup with a little cornstarch dissolved in water.) Dress up your soup with grilled shrimp or scallops to start a very special meal—even drizzle on a little Mexican crema or crème fraiche right before serving. s fresh lime juice
1 medium ripe mango, peeled, flesh cut from the pit and diced
Salt

Directions:

1. Cut the avocados in half, running your knife around the pit from stem to blossom end and back up again. Twist the halves in opposite directions to free the pit, and pull the halves apart. Dislodge the pit, then scoop the avocado flesh into a large bowl. Coarsely mash the avocado with a large fork or potato masher. Rinse the onion under cold water, shake off the excess water, then add it to the avocado along with the serrano, cilantro and lime juice.
 2. Mix in 2/3 of the diced mango. Taste and season with salt. If not using immediately, cover with plastic wrap pressed directly on the surface of the guacamole and refrigerate – preferably for no more than a few hours.
 3. When you're ready to serve, scoop guacamole into a serving bowl and garnish with the remaining diced mango and cilantro sprigs. Serve with tortilla chips, slices of cucumber or jícama.
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Garlicky Black Pepper Tortilla Chips (Totopos al Ajo con Pimienta Negra)

Makes enough chips for 8 to 9 as a snack

Ingredients

½ cup light vegetable oil (grapeseed oil works beautifully here)

6 large garlic cloves, peeled and finely chopped or pressed through a garlic press

½ teaspoon fresh black pepper, plus more for sprinkling on the chips

It's based on a classic soup from Central and Eastern Mexico that's called chileatole.

Ingredients:

1 small white onion, sliced ¼-inch thick

1 large fresh poblano chile, stemmed, seeded and roughly chopped

1 tablespoon vegetable or olive oil

2 cups corn kernels, either freshly cut off the cobs or frozen

2 cups Frontera Roasted Tomatillo Salsa

2 ½ cups chicken broth

2 tablespoons freshly ground corn masa for tortillas (you'll have to get this at a tortilla factory or well-stocked Mexican grocery) OR masa harina (corn "flour")

Salt, about ½ teaspoon

½ cup chopped fresh cilantro

Directions: In a large saucepan or soup pot, cook the onion and poblano in the oil for 5 or 6 minutes until both are tender. Scrape into a blender or food processor and add half of the corn and all of the salsa. Process to a smooth puree and press through a medium-mesh strainer back into the pan or pot.

Stir in the broth, partially cover and simmer over medium-low, stirring often, for 30 minutes. In a small bowl, mix the fresh masa or masa harina with ¼ cup water, making sure there are no lumps. Strain the mixture (you can use the same strainer) directly into the simmering pot,

stirring all the while. Continue to stir until the soup thickens, then taste and season with salt. Add the remaining corn kernels, let return to a simmer, then ladle into warm bowls and sprinkle with the chopped cilantro before carrying to the table.

Acapulco-Style Shrimp Cocktail (Coctel de Camarones, estilo Acapulco)

Makes 4 cups, serving 4 to 6

Ingredients

1 pound cooked shrimp
1/2 cup fresh lime juice
3/4 cup ketchup
1 to 2 tablespoons hot sauce (Tabasco Chipotle Pepper Sauce is delicious here)
1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
1/2 small white onion, finely diced
1/2 cup (loosely packed) chopped cilantro, plus a few springs for garnish
1 ripe avocado

Directions

1. Place the shrimp in a large bowl and add the lime juice. Measure in the ketchup, hot sauce, Worcestershire, onion and cilantro. Mix well.
2. Cut the avocado in half, running a knife around the pit from stem to blossom end and back again. Twist the two sides apart and scoop out the pit. Scoop each half out onto your cutting board, cut gently into small cubes, then scoop the avocado on top of the shrimp mixture. Carefully fold in the avocado, then divide the mixture between 4 to 6 serving dishes (martini glasses make a dressy presentation). Garnish with sprigs of cilantro and prepare for a taste of beach-side dining.

Basic Tamale

Makes about 26 tamales

Ingredients

1 8-ounce package dried cornhusks
10 ounces (1 1/3 cups) rich-tasting pork lard (or vegetable shortening), slightly softened but not at all runny
1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
2 pounds (4 cups) fresh coarse-ground corn masa for tamales OR 3 1/2 cups dried masa harina for tamales mixed with 2 1/4 cups hot water
1 to 1 1/2 cups chicken broth
2 1/2 to 3 cups Pork in Red Chile Filling or Chicken in Green Chile Filling (recipes below)

Directions

1. Preparing the cornhusks. Cover the husks with very hot water, weight with a plate to keep them submerged, and let stand for a couple of hours until the husks are pliable. For forming

the tamales, separate out 28 of the largest and most pliable husks—ones that are at least 6 inches across on the wider end and 6 or 7 inches long. If you can't find enough good ones, overlap some of the large ones to give wide, sturdy surfaces to spread the batter on. Pat the chosen husks dry with a towel.

2. Preparing the batter. With an electric mixer on medium-high speed, beat the lard or shortening with 2 teaspoons salt and the baking powder until light in texture, about 1 minute. Continue beating as you add the masa (fresh or reconstituted) in three additions. Reduce the speed to medium-low and add 1 cup of the broth. Continue beating for another minute or so, until a ½-teaspoon dollop of the batter floats in a cup of cold water (if it floats you can be sure the tamales will be tender and light). Beat in enough of the remaining ½ cup of broth to give the mixture the consistency of soft (not runny) cake batter; it should hold its shape in a spoon. Taste the batter and season with additional salt if you think it needs some. For the lightest textured tamales, refrigerate the batter for an hour or so, then rebeat, adding a little more broth or water to bring the mixture to the soft consistency it had before.

3. Setting up the steamer. Steaming 26 husk-wrapped tamales can be done in batches in a collapsible vegetable steamer set into a large, deep saucepan. To steam them all at once, you need something like the kettle-size tamal steamers used in Mexico or Asian stack steamers, or you can improvise by setting a wire rack on 4 coffee or custard cups in a large kettle. It is best to line the rack or upper part of the steamer with leftover cornhusks to protect the tamales from direct contact with the steam and to add more flavor. Make sure to leave tiny spaces between the husks so condensing steam can drain off.

4. Forming the tamales. Cut twenty-six 8- to 10-inch pieces of string or thin strips of cornhusks. One at a time, form the tamales: Lay out one of your chosen cornhusks with the tapering end toward you. Spread about ¼ cup of the batter into about a 4-inch square, leaving at least a 1 ½-inch border on the side toward you and a ¾-inch border along the other sides (with large husks, the borders will be much bigger). Spoon about 1 ½ tablespoons of the filling down the center of the batter. Pick up the two long sides of the cornhusk and bring them together (this will cause the batter to surround the filling). If the uncovered borders of the two long sides you're holding are narrow, tuck one side under the other; if wide, roll both sides in the same direction around the tamal. (If the husk is small, you may feel more comfortable wrapping the tamal in a second husk.) Finally, fold up the empty 1 ½-inch section of the husk (to form a tightly closed "bottom" leaving the top open), and secure it in place by loosely tying one of the strings or strips of husk around the tamal. As they're made, stand the tamales on their folded bottoms in the prepared steamer. Don't tie the tamales too tightly or pack them too closely in the steamer. They need room to expand.

5. Steaming and serving the tamales. When all the tamales are in the steamer, cover them with a layer of leftover cornhusks; if your husk-wrapped tamales don't take up the entire steamer, fill in the open spaces with loosely wadded aluminum foil (to keep the tamales from falling over). Set the lid in place and steam over a constant medium heat for about 1 ¼ hours. Watch carefully that all the water doesn't boil away and, to keep the steam steady, pour boiling water into the pot when more is necessary. Tamales are done when the husk peels away from the masa easily. Let tamales stand in the steamer off the heat for a few minutes to firm up. For the best textured tamales, let them cool completely, then re-steam about 15 minutes to heat through.

Chicken in Green Chile Filling for Tamales

Yield: a generous 2-3 cups, enough for 24 tamales

Ingredients

2 tablespoons fresh masa or masa harina
1 16-ounce bottle tomatillo salsa
3 cups lightly packed, coarsely shredded cooked chicken (I like to use rotisserie chicken)
Salt, if necessary

Directions

Pour 1/4 cup water into a small bowl and whisk in the masa or masa harina until thoroughly blended. In a medium (3-quart) saucepan, bring the salsa to a boil over medium-high heat. Strain in the masa mixture, and whisk until the mixture thickens slightly. Remove from the heat and let the sauce cool to room temperature. Scoop the chicken into a bowl and stir in the thickened salsa. Taste and season with more salt if you wish.

Pork in Red Chile Filling for Tamales

Yield: 2 cups, enough for 16 tamales

Ingredients:

1/3 cup top-quality chile powder without salt
3/4 teaspoon salt if no salt in chile powder
1 pound boneless pork shoulder, cut into 1-inch cubes
2 tablespoons fresh masa or masa harina
1/4 cup raisins
1/4 cup roughly chopped green olives
Salt, if necessary

Directions: In a medium (3-quart) saucepan, whisk together the chile powder, salt and 3 cups water. Add the meat and bring to a boil over high heat to consistency it had before.

3. Setting up the steamer. Steaming 26 husk-wrapped tamales can be done in batches in a collapsible vegetable steamer set into a large, deep saucepan. To steam them all at once, you need something like the kettle-size tamal steamers used in Mexico or Asian stack steamers, or you can improvise by setting a wire rack on 4 coffee or custard cups in a large kettle. It is best to line the rack or upper part of the steamer with leftover cornhusks to protect the tamales from direct contact with the steam and to add more flavor. Make sure to leave tiny spaces between the husks so condensing steam can drain off.

4. Forming the tamales. Cut twenty-six 8- to 10-inch pieces of string or thin strips of cornhusks. One at a time, form the tamales: Lay out one of your chosen cornhusks with the tapering end toward you. Spread about 1/4 cup of the batter into about a 4-inch square, leaving at least a 1 1/2-inch border on the side toward you and a 3/4-inch border along the other sides (with large husks, the borders will be much bigger). Spoon about 1 1/2 tablespoons of the filling down the center of the batter. Pick up the two long sides of the cornhusk and bring them together (this will cause the batter to surround the filling). If the uncovered borders of

the two long sides you're holding are narrow, tuck one side under the other; if wide, roll both sides in the same direction around the tamal. (If the husk is small, you may feel more comfortable wrapping the tamal in a second husk.) Finally, fold up the empty 1 ½-inch section of the husk (to form a tightly closed "bottom" leaving the top open), and secure it in place by loosely tying one of the strings or strips of husk around the tamal. As they're made, stand the tamales on their folded bottoms in the prepared steamer. Don't tie the tamales too tightly or pack them too closely in the steamer. They need room to expand.

. Partially cover and reduce the temperature to keep the liquid at a gentle simmer until the meat is fall-apart tender, about 1 hour. Let cool for a few minutes, then use a slotted spoon to remove the meat. Pour ¼ cup water into a small bowl and whisk in the masa or masa harina until thoroughly blended. Return the sauce to a boil over medium-high heat. Strain in the masa mixture, and whisk until the mixture boils and thickens slightly. Remove from the heat, taste and season with additional salt if necessary.

Use fingers or 2 forks to break the meat into coarse shreds. Scoop into a bowl and stir in the raisins and olives along with one cup of the thickened sauce. You can save the rest of the sauce, rewarm it and serve it over the tamales, if you wish.

Enchiladas

Prep Time: 15 minutes, Cook Time: 15 minutes

Ingredients:

12 corn tortillas

1 28oz can of red enchilada sauce

2 cups (16 oz) mozzarella or queso blanco

1 1/2 cups meat (optional) shredded beef or chicken

2-3 tablespoons oil

Preparation:

Coat each tortilla with oil using your hands or a brush. Spread out on a cookie sheet or baking dish and bake in a 500 degree oven for about 7 minutes. Take out to cool until they are warm to the touch. The cheese can be shredded, or just cut into slices 3-4 inches long, and 1/4 inch thick. (Or thicker if you like them really cheesy.)

Pour just enough sauce in the bottom of a 9x13 glass baking dish to cover the it. Pour the rest of the sauce in a large bowl. Dip tortillas, one at a time, in the bowl to coat with sauce.

Lay the tortilla in baking dish and if you're using the meat, put in about 2-3 tablespoons. Place the cheese on top of the meat. Fold one edge over the cheese, then the other one, then turn the whole thing over, folded side down, in baking dish. Repeat for each tortilla. Sprinkle any leftover sauce and/or cheese on top of enchiladas.

Place in 400 degree oven for 15 minutes or until cheese is melted.

Fish Tacos by Bobby Flay

Yield: 6 to 8 servings, Cook Time 45 min

Ingredients

Tacos:

1 pound white flaky fish, such as mahi mahi or orata
1/4 cup canola oil
1 lime, juiced
1 tablespoons ancho chili powder
1 jalapeno, coarsely chopped
1/4 cup chopped fresh cilantro leaves
8 flour tortillas

Garnish:

Shredded white cabbage
Hot sauce
Crema or sour cream
Thinly sliced red onion
Thinly sliced green onion
Chopped cilantro leaves
Pureed Tomato Salsa, recipe follows

Directions

Preheat grill to medium-high heat. Place fish in a medium size dish. Whisk together the oil, lime juice, ancho, jalapeno, and cilantro and pour over the fish. Let marinate for 15 to 20 minutes.

Remove the fish from the marinade place onto a hot grill, flesh side down. Grill the fish for 4 minutes on the first side and then flip for 30 seconds and remove. Let rest for 5 minutes then flake the fish with a fork.

Place the tortillas on the grill and grill for 20 seconds. Divide the fish among the tortillas and garnish with any or all of the garnishes.

Pureed Tomato Salsa:

2 tablespoon peanut oil
1 small red onion, coarsely chopped
4 cloves garlic, coarsely chopped
4 large ripe tomatoes, chopped
1 serrano chile
1 jalapeno, sliced
1 tablespoon chipotle hot sauce
1 tablespoon Mexican oregano
1/4 cup chopped fresh cilantro leaves
Salt and pepper

Preheat grill or use side burners of the grill. Heat oil in medium saucepan, add onions and garlic and cook until soft. Add tomatoes, serrano and jalapeno and cook until tomatoes are soft, about 15 to 20 minutes. Puree the mixture with a hand-held immersion blender until smooth and cook for an additional 10 to 15 minutes. Add the hot sauce, oregano, cilantro and lime juice and season with salt and pepper, to taste.

Chile relleno

Allow yourself a little extra time the first time you make it, but after that it will seem easy. Make sure you have all the tools and ingredients assembled first. You can omit the flour for a low-carb version.

Time Required: 15 to 20 minutes

Here's How: Choose a mild long green chili. Roast and peel each chile and let them cool. Remove the seeds. Insert a sharp knife into the top of the chile, just under the stem and slice downward about half way down the chile. Using a spoon or a knife, scrape the seeds and the white membrane out, without tearing the chiles flesh.

Stuff the chiles: Place a slice of jack cheese into the chile, but don't force it. If the cheese is too large, trim it down until it fits inside. Make sure the open edges of the chile still come together.

This step is optional Place half of the flour on the bottom of a plate. Place the chiles on the flour and sprinkle the rest of the flour on top. Use your finger to make sure the entire chile is coated. Dust off remaining flour and set chiles aside. If you rinsed your chiles in water, this step is important for the batter to stick.

For a simple batter, whip 3-6 egg whites until stiff. Slowly fold in yolks and a pinch of salt. Or use your favorite batter recipe.

One at a time, dip the stuffed chiles into the batter and then into the hot oil. Cook until batter is a crisp golden brown. Remove chiles from the oil and drain on paper towels. Tips: Use cold eggs for the batter. Test the oil with a drop of batter before putting a whole chile in. If the drop of batter sizzles and floats to the top, it's the right temp. If it sinks, the oil is not hot enough. The flour should be a very light coat. It helps the batter stick to the chile. Monterey Jack and Queso Blanco work well for Chile Rellenos

Refried Beans Recipe

Ingredients:

2 1/2 cups of dry pinto beans (about 1 lb or 450gm)

3 quarts of water

1/2 cup chopped onion

2 Tbsp pork lard, bacon fat, or olive oil (for vegetarian option)

1/4 cup water

Salt to taste

Cheddar cheese (optional)

Method

1 Rinse the beans in water and remove any small stones, pieces of dirt, or bad beans.

2 Cook the beans in water. Pressure Cooker method Put beans into a 4 quart pressure cooker

with a 15 lb weight. Fill up the pressure cooker with water, up to the line that indicates the capacity for the pot. Cook for 30-35 minutes - until the beans are soft and the skins are barely breaking open.

Regular method Put beans into a pot and cover beans with at least 3 inches of water - about 3 quarts for 2 1/2 cups of dry beans. Bring to a boil and then lower heat to simmer, covered, for about 2 1/2 hours. The cooking time will vary depending on the batch of beans you have. The beans are done when they are soft and the skin is just beginning to break open. Strain the beans from the cooking water.

3 Add the onions and lard/fat/oil to a wide, sturdy (not with a flimsy stick-free lining) frying pan on medium high heat. Cook onions until translucent. (Note the onions are optie tortillas and garnish with any or all of the garnishes.

Pureed Tomato Salsa:

2 tablespoon peanut oil
1 small red onion, coarsely chopped
4 cloves garlic, coarsely chopped
4 large ripe tomatoes, chopped
1 serrano chile
1 jalapeno, sliced
1 tablespoon chipotle hot sauce
1 tablespoon Mexican oregano
1/4 cup chopped fresh cilantro leaves
Salt and pepper

Preheat grill or use side burners of the grill. Heat oil in medium saucepan, add onions and garlic and cook until soft. Add tomatoes, serrano and jalapeno and cook until tomatoes are soft, about 15 to 20 minutes. Puree the mixture with a hand-held immersion blender until smooth and cook for an additional 10 to 15 minutes. Add the hot sauce, oregano, cilantro and lime juice and season with salt and pepper, to taste.

onal, you can skip them if you want.) Add the strained beans and about a 1/4 cup of water to the pan. Using a potato masher, mash the beans in the pan, while you are cooking them, until they are a rough purée. Add more water if necessary to keep the fried beans from getting too dried out. Add salt to taste. Add a few slices of cheddar cheese, or some (1/2 cup) grated cheddar cheese if you want. When beans are heated through (and optional cheese melted) the beans are ready to serve.

Note that many recipes call for soaking the beans overnight and discarding the soaking liquid. We don't. We discard the cooking liquid and just add some water back into the frying pan when we are frying the beans.

Mexican Rice

PREP TIME 5 Min COOK TIME 25 Min

INGREDIENTS (Nutrition)

3 tablespoons vegetable oil
1 cup uncooked long-grain rice
1 teaspoon garlic salt
1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
1/4 cup chopped onion
1/2 cup tomato sauce
2 cups chicken broth

DIRECTIONS

Heat oil in a large saucepan over medium heat and add rice. Cook, stirring constantly, until puffed and golden. While rice is cooking, sprinkle with salt and cumin. Stir in onions and cook until tender. Stir in tomato sauce and chicken broth; bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low, cover and simmer for 20 to 25 minutes. Fluff with a fork.

Mexican Flourless chiles from the oil and drain on paper towels. Tips: Use cold eggs for the batter. Test the oil with a drop of batter before putting a whole chile in. If the drop of batter sizzles and floats to the top, it's the right temp. If it sinks, the oil is not hot enough. The flour should be a very light coat. It helps the batter stick to the chile. Monterey Jack and Queso Blanco work well for Chile Rellenos

Refried Beans Recipe

Ingredients:

2 1/2 cups of dry pinto beans (about 1 lb or 450gm)
3 quarts of water
1/2 cup chopped onion
2 Tbsp pork lard, bacon fat, or olive oil (for vegetarian option)
1/4 cup water
Salt to taste
Cheddar cheese (optional)

Method

1 Rinse the beans in water and remove any small stones, pieces of dirt, or bad beans.

2 Cook the beans in water. Pressure Cooker method Put beans into a 4 quart pressure cooker with a 15 lb weight. Fill up the pressure cooker with water, up to the line that indicates the capacity for the pot. Cook for 30-35 minutes - until the beans are soft and the skins are barely breaking open.

Regular method Put beans into a pot and cover beans with at least 3 inches of water - about 3 quarts for 2 1/2 cups of dry beans. Bring to a boil and then lower heat to simmer, covered, for about 2 1/2 hours. The cooking time will vary depending on the batch of beans you have. The beans are done when they are soft and the skin is just beginning to break open. Strain the beans from the cooking water.

3 Add the onions and lard/fat/oil to a wide, sturdy (not with a flimsy stick-free lining) frying pan on medium high heat. Cook onions until translucent. (Note the onions are optie tortillas and garnish with any or all of the garnishes.

Pureed Tomato Salsa:

**2 tablespoon peanut oil
1 small red onion, coarsely chopped
4 cloves garlic, coarsely chopped
4 large ripe tomatoes, chopped
1 serrano chile
1 jalapeno, sliced
1 tablespoon chipotle hot sauce
1 tablespoon Mexican oregano**

1/4 cup chopped fresh cilantro leaves

Salt and pepper

Preheat grill or use side burners of the grill. Heat oil in medium saucepan, add onions and garlic and cook until soft. Add tomatoes, serrano and jalapeno and cook until tomatoes are soft, about 15 to 20 minutes. Puree the mixture with a hand-held immersion blender until smooth and cook for an additional 10 to 15 minutes. Add the hot sauce, oregano, cilantro and lime juice and season with salt and pepper, to taste.

Chocolate Cake

Serves 6

This is our take on flourless chocolate cake. We've adapted this recipe from one that Alice Medrich created giving it our signature flair by adding Mexican chocolate and ancho chile powder. For a little more kick, try using Lindt's Excellence Chili Chocolate bar in place of the bittersweet chocolate. Since we're debuting this dessert on the web site for Valentine's Day, you can add 2 tablespoons of raspberry liqueur to the crema topping when you add the sugar to make the crema pink.

Ingredients

4 ounces (1 stick) unsalted butter, plus extra for greasing the cups
7 ounces bittersweet chocolate (60 to 62% cocoa)
1½ ounces (½ of 1 tablet) Mexican chocolate, we prefer Ibarra brand, extra for garnish
¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon
2 teaspoons ancho chile powder
2 tablespoons Kahula
4 large eggs
¾ cup Mexican crema, sour cream or crème fraîche
1½ tablespoons superfine sugar

Directions: Set your oven rack to the middle position and preheat the oven to 325 degrees. Grease the sides and bottom of 6 coffee cups* (8 ounce capacity) with the extra butter. Set them in the bottom of a deep roasting pan. Bring a kettle of water to boil.

Add the bittersweet, Mexican chocolate, cinnamon and ancho powder into the food processor. Pulse until the chocolate is ground into very small pieces. Transfer the chocolate into a large mixing bowl.

In a small pot set over medium heat, bring the stick of butter to a boil. Remove from the heat and pour the melted butter over the chocolate. Stir until all the chocolate has melted and the

mixture is smooth. Add the Kahula and blend it into the chocolate.

Beat the eggs in an electric mixer using the whisk attachment on high speed for 5 minutes. Using a large rubber spatula, gently fold the egg mixture into the chocolate mixture in three stages.

Divide the batter evenly between the prepared cups. I find that using a ladle make this step easier. Smooth out the tops. Set the roasting pan into the oven and pour enough hot water to come about halfway up the sides of the cups. Bake until the top of the cake has set and the edges are just beginning to pull away from the sides, 22 - 25 minutes. The cake will continue to firm up as it cools. Remove the cups from the water bath and set on a wire rack to cool to room temperature. Cover and refrigerate until ready to serve.

When ready to serve, place the cup on a saucer. Whisk together the crema and sugar. Add a dollop of the sweetened crema to the top of each cake and top it with a sprinkle of grated Mexican chocolate.

* Cook's Note: It's important when choosing a coffee cup for this recipe that the cup isn't tapered too much. It should be close to the same size on the top as it is on the bottom so that the cake bakes evenly.

Advance Preparation: You can prepare the cake batter, fill the cups, hold them covered with plastic in the refrigerator for up to 4 hours before baking. Follow baking instructions, but increase the baking time to 28 to 30 minutes. Once baked, they'll last several days in the refrigerator wrapped in plastic.