

Ancho Grilled Shrimp Tacos with Mango Salsa

makes 8 tacos (served 4)

for the shrimp:

2 oz. dried ancho or pasilla chilies
1 orange, zested and juiced
8 garlic cloves
1 tbl honey
olive oil, as needed
2 tsp salt
1 lb medium prawns, peeled, cleaned, tails removed
2 limes

for the tacos:

2 mango, peeled and cut into big wedges
2 cups shredded red cabbage
1/2 cup cilantro leaves
1 lime, juiced
sour cream, optional, for serving
8 corn tortillas

***** Preparation ******

For the shrimp:

Pour boiling water over the dried chilies and set aside for 20 minutes. Drain, discard the stems and seeds. In a blender, combine the re-hydrated chilies, garlic, orange, honey, salt and enough olive oil to create a paste. Preheat a grill pan over high heat. Pour the paste over the shrimp and toss to coat. Grill the shrimp until JUST cooked and set aside. Squeeze some fresh lime on the shrimp right when you remove them from the grill.

For the tacos:

Leave the grill pan on high. Toss the mangos with olive oil and grill until just marked. Remove and let cool. In a bowl toss together the cabbage and cilantro. Roughly chop the mango and add to the bowl. Lightly dress the mixture with fresh lime juice and olive oil and salt and pepper. Grill the tortillas until warm. Assemble tacos with some of the shrimp and some of the cabbage mixture and sour cream (if using).

Cheesy Black Bean and Chorizo Dip with Salsa Fresca

serves 6 as an appetizer

for the dip:

olive oil
8 oz. chorizo, diced small
2 15-oz cans black beans, rinsed and drained very well
1/4 cup tequila
shredded jack cheese, 4 cups

for the salsa:

3 roma tomatoes, halved and seeded
1/4 onion white onion, peeled
1/2 cup cilantro
1 lime, juiced
salt and pepper
tortilla chips, for serving

***** Preparation ******

For the dip:

Heat a large non-stick skillet over high heat. Add a light drizzle of olive oil. Add the chorizo and cook for a couple minutes. Add the beans and tequila and boil for about 1 minute. Add in the cheese and stir over low heat until melted.

For the salsa:

In a food processor, combine the halved tomatoes, onion, cilantro and lime juice. Pulse until finely chopped. Season with salt and pepper.

Serve the dip warm, topped with the salsa, with tortilla chips for dipping.



Mexican Rice Pilaf with Fresh Corn, Scallions and Cotija Cheese

serves 8-10

2 tbl butter
2 cups long grain white rice
3-4 cups chicken stock
4 cobs corn on the cob, husked and cleaned
4 scallions, thinly sliced (whites and greens)
1 cup crumbled Cotija cheese, (or mild feta cheese)
1 lime, zested and juiced
chopped cilantro, for garnish
salt and pepper

***** Preparation ******

Heat a 4-quart pot with a lid over high heat. Add the butter. When melted, add the rice. Cook the rice, stirring constantly, until it begins to smell nutty. Stir in chicken stock -- enough to cover the rice by 1-inch. Bring to a boil, reduce to simmer, cover and cook for 15 minutes.

Meanwhile, cut the corn off the cob and assemble the rest of the ingredients.

When the rice is cooked, remove from the heat and fluff with a fork. Dump the rice into a large bowl and gently toss with the corn, scallions, lime zest and juice and cotija. Taste and season with salt and pepper. Serve topped with chopped cilantro.

Key Lime-Pineapple Margaritas

makes 4 drinks

1 cup chopped fresh pineapple

3/4 cup Cointreau , or other orange-flavor liqueur

1/2 cup tequila

1/2 cup Key lime juice

1/4 cup agave syrup, or superfine sugar

ice

***** Preparation ******

Add the pineapple to the blender -- add ice to fill to the top. Add the rest of the ingredients and blend until smooth. Add more agave or sugar to taste.

Serve in salt-rimmed glasses as desired.