

Mexican Favorites at Home

September 2009

Menu:

Nachos with Smokey Dried Chili Salsa
Chicken Enchiladas with Roasted Poblano Sauce
Mexican Rice Pilaf with Black Beans
Mango, Jicama and Avocado Salad

Smokey Dried Chili Salsa

makes about 2 cups

2oz dried chilies, **

2 large garlic cloves, peeled

3 roma tomatoes, halved and seeded

1/2 cup chopped white onion

1 teaspoon cumin

1 teaspoon chopped canned chipotle chili, (optional)

salt

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

Tear the chilies open, discard the stem and seeds.

Preheat an oven to 500 degrees (or a high broil setting). Toss the chili pieces, garlic cloves, tomatoes and onions together and place onto a baking sheet. Drizzle with olive oil. Roast for about 15 minutes, until everything is lightly browned.

Remove and place into a blender with the cumin and chipotle (if using) and some salt. Blend until smooth, add water if needed to make a thinner consistency. Taste and add more salt and needed.

SERVING SUGGESTION -

For simple nachos, preheat oven to 450 degrees. Spread out a layer of corn chips in a baking dish and drizzle with salsa. Top with cheese and another layer of chips. Top with more salsa and more cheese. Bake until cheese is melted. Top with chopped scallions and cilantro to serve.



Chicken Enchiladas with Roasted Poblano Sauce

makes 12 enchiladas

for the sauce:

2 poblano chilies
2 13-oz cans canned tomatillos, drained
1 jalapeno, stemmed
1 small white onion, peeled and cut into small pieces
1 clove garlic, peeled
small handful cilantro
1 tablespoon vegetable oil
2 cups chicken stock
1/2 cup crema or sour cream, plus more for garnish
salt and pepper

for the enchiladas:

12 small tortillas, corn or flour
4 cups chopped or shredded cooked chicken, (leftover from roasted or grilled chicken works best)
4 cups shredded jack cheese
finely chopped onions & cilantro, for garnish

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

For the sauce -

Place the poblano chilies over a live gas flame and let char, turning occasionally so that all sides get blackened. Set aside and let cool. Rub off some of the black skin from the poblanos (some of the skin will remain on the chilies -- that's fine!). Tear open the chilies and discard the stem and seeds. Place the chili flesh into a blender.

Add the tomatillos, onion, garlic, cilantro and jalapeno to the blender. Blend until smooth.

Heat a large skillet over high heat. Add oil. When hot, add the sauce all at once. Cook for about 5 minutes. Add in the stock and cook for about 15 minutes, until reduced and slightly thicker. Remove from heat and whisk in sour cream. Taste and season with salt and pepper.

For the enchiladas -

Preheat oven to 375 degrees.

Be sure the sauce is still very warm. Spoon a bit of the sauce into a 9x13-inch casserole dish to cover the bottom. Dunk each tortilla into the hot sauce to make it pliable. Remove and fill with some chicken and cheese. Roll tightly and place into the baking dish. Continue with all of the tortillas. Top with more sauce and cheese and cover with foil.

Bake for about 25 minutes until bubbly -- remove the foil the last 10 minutes for a golden top.

Serve sprinkled with onions, cilantro and a dollop of sour cream.

Mexican Rice Pilaf with Black Beans

serves 6-8 people

2 tablespoon vegetable oil
1 white onion, diced small
1 tablespoon cumin
1 tablespoon chili powder
1/4 cup tomato paste
2 cups long grain white rice
1 jalapeno
3 cups chicken stock, plus more as needed
2 15-oz cans black beans, drained and rinsed very well
salt and pepper

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

Place a 4-quart pot over medium-high heat. Add the oil. Add the onions and cook until soft. Add the cumin, chili powder and tomato paste. Cook for about a minute until very fragrant. Add the rice and cook, stirring, until all the rice is coated evenly with the spices and paste. Stir in enough stock to cover the rice by about 1-inch. Cut a slit into the jalapeno (but leave it whole!) and drop into the pot. Stir to be sure no rice is stuck to the bottom of the pot.

Cover and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer for 15 minutes. Remove from heat and let sit for 10 minutes.

Fluff with a fork. Taste and season with salt and pepper. Discard jalapeno and stir in black beans.

Mango, Jicama and Avocado Salad

serves about 6 people

for the dressing:

- 1 teaspoon chopped canned chipotle chili
- 1/4 cup cilantro leaves
- 1 orange, zest and juice
- 1 tablespoon honey
- 1/4 cup lime juice
- 1/2 cup vegetable or olive oil
- 1 teaspoon salt

for the salad:

- 2 mangos
- 3 cups diced jicama
- 2 large avocado
- 1/2 cup cilantro leaves
- 4 cups butter lettuce or mache greens
- chili powder, for garnish

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

For the dressing -

Place the chipotle chilies, cilantro, orange zest and juice, honey, lime juice, oil and salt into a blender. Blend until smooth.

For the salad

Cut the skin off the mango and cut the flesh away from the pit. Cut into large dice and place into a bowl.

Peel and cut the jicama into large dice and add to the bowl. Peel and cut the avocados into large dice and add to the bowl. Add the cilantro leaves. Once the avocados are added, immediately toss gently with some of the dressing.

Toss the greens with some of the dressing. Serve the salad greens topped with the avocado mixture, sprinkled with chili powder for garnish.