

En familia

Recipes

from the great
big multicultural
world of

Lopez Negrete
Communications

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En familia

Recipes

AS PART OF OUR LONG-STANDING HOLIDAY TRADITION, WE HAVE ALWAYS ENJOYED SHARING SOME OF OUR AGENCY FAMILY'S FAVORITE RECIPES WITH ALL THE PEOPLE THAT HAVE MADE THIS YEAR SPECIAL.

YOU'LL GET TO KNOW US IN A DIFFERENT LIGHT - THROUGH A COLLECTION OF RECIPES THAT ARE IMPORTANT TO OUR INDIVIDUAL CELEBRATIONS OF THE HOLIDAYS, THROUGH THE RECIPES HANDED DOWN FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION, LEARNED IN A GRANDMOTHER'S KITCHEN OR AT THE SIDE OF A TREASURED FRIEND. THEY RANGE FROM THE TRADITIONAL TO THE INNOVATIVE, BUT THEY ARE ALL DELICIOUS, AND EVERY YEAR WE ADD NEW ONES.

SO GET READY TO INDULGE IN SOME OF OUR FAVORITES, TO NIBBLE, MUNCH AND SIP SOME VERY SPECIAL TREATS - A CULINARY CELEBRATION OF OUR TRADITIONS.

OUR WISH FOR YOU THIS HOLIDAY SEASON IS THAT IT BE A TIME SPENT WITH FRIENDS AND FAMILY, ENJOYING THE MOMENTS THAT REALLY MATTER.

¡FELICIDADES!

ALEX & CATHY



Those who have received, read and enjoyed our cookbooks over the past two decades now know I cannot cook (as my culinary prowess is limited to blending, mixing, pouring and grilling, which at least come in handy when mixing drinks or at barbecues). You also know that the holidays when I was growing up were filled with wonderful traditions, tastes, colors and feelings that remain embedded in my mind and heart forever. And, lastly, you are also keenly aware that my mother served up probably the most powerful, addicting and tasty eggnog in the land (refer to Dorothy's Nuclear Eggnog recipe, which can be found in the Archived 2007 Cookbook). But, this year's recipe is not a new one – but a great one. I shared it with my Familia LNC years ago, long before there was a digital version of the cookbook, and felt it worthy of resurrection. So, here's the story: As I became a teenager, another tradition came about: on Christmas Day, once the presents were opened, after we'd gone to mass, "la bola de cuates" (my bunch of friends) would get together and tour each others' homes from early afternoon to late evening. It was wonderful. It was a chance to wish a Merry Christmas to all our friends' families (all of which we had known since we were babies), and, of course, a chance to continue sampling some of the best food and drink in the world. It was almost like attending a city-wide Christmas buffet (and when you're talking about Mexico City – that's big!).

On this "culinary tour" of sorts, I discovered yet another holiday drink I really enjoyed: Rompope. This drink is Mexico's own super-rich version of eggnog and was prepared and served in many of my friends' homes during the holidays, and, of course, it remains a tradition throughout Mexico today. Not unlike eggnog in the United States, Rompope recipes vary from region to region, and while its origin seems to be Poblano (from the city of Puebla in the outskirts of Mexico City), there is a recipe that comes from Guadalajara, which I would like to share with you. Pretty soon you won't be saying, "Got Milk?" You'll be saying, "Got Rompope?" And wait 'til you see the mustache Rompope leaves on your face! ¡Salud!

— Alex López Negrete

Rompop (Guadalajara Style)

Preparation:
Place the condensed milk, the fresh milk and the egg yolks in a blender and process for 30 seconds (the average length of our wonderful television commercials) or until it is all mixed, but not frothy. Add the rum and process while watching another one of our beautiful 30-second commercials.
Chill. Cool? Cool!

Servings: 6 to 8

Ingredients:

- 1 can (14 ounces) condensed milk
- 14 ounces fresh milk (don't use the skim, low fat or that other watery stuff; do what I do – just use the condensed milk can to measure)
- 6 large egg yolks
- 6 ounces dark rum (don't be cheap, use the good stuff)



OK, I found this recipe in "Cook's Country" and made it at our lake house ... I'm not kidding when I say this slab pie didn't even last 20 minutes on the counter. Every single person ate at least three pieces immediately! This is by far my favorite dessert recipe. I love it!
— Cathy López Negrete

Ingredients:

Filling

- 8 Granny Smith apples
- 8 Golden Delicious apples
- 2 cups sugar
- ½ tablespoon salt
- 1 ½ cups Animal Crackers
- 2 (15 oz) boxes of Pillsbury ready-to-roll pie crust
- 4 tablespoons butter (melted and cooled)
- 6 tablespoons Minute Tapioca (not made)
- 2 tablespoons ground cinnamon
- 3 tablespoons lemon juice

Glaze

- 2 tablespoons milk
- 2 cups confectioner's sugar
- 8 tablespoons butter (1 stick)
- (I usually double this.)



Apple Slab Pie

Preparation:

Use an 18x13 non-stick cookie sheet. Spray with Pam cooking spray.

Filling

Combine apples, 1 ½ cups sugar and salt in a bowl, let sit for 30 minutes. (I slice my apples thin with a 2 blade in my food processor.) Adjust oven rack to lower-middle position and heat oven to 350 degrees.

In the food processor, pulse Animal Crackers with ½ cup of sugar until it's very fine. Dust work surface (I use a pastry cloth) with flour and crackers, overlay pie dough. Wet overlapping area (just 1/3 of pie dough), then roll out to fit cookie sheet. Put some melted butter on it.

Toss drained apples with tapioca, cinnamon and lemon juice and arrange evenly over bottom crust, pressing lightly to flatten. Brush edges of bottom crust with water, and arrange top crust on pie. Press crust together and use a paring knife to trim any excess dough. Use fork to crimp and seal outside edges of pie and then pierce top of pie at 2-inch intervals.

Roll out next two layers of pie dough in the same way as the first one, and top with butter each time. Bake. It will take about an hour in the oven. Look for bubbling juice. Don't forget to poke holes before you put it in the oven. Transfer the pie to wire rack and let cool for 1 hour.

Glaze

Put sugar in a bowl; add butter and milk, and mix (I use an electric mixer). Put the mix on the pie, let cool completely, about 1 hour. Serve!

HOLIDAY
SPIRIT FULFILLS
THE GREATEST
HUNGER OF
MANKIND.

Appetizers

Avocado Wrapped
with Serrano Ham



This appetizer is very simple and it looks very pretty. It can also be prepared with cucumbers instead of avocados.

— Erika Villarreal

Servings: 8

Ingredients:

- 2 Haas avocados, sliced
- 12 thin slices Serrano ham
- Honey
- 1/4 cup chopped pistachios

Preparation:

Wrap each avocado slice with one slice of Serrano ham. Place on a serving platter. Sprinkle with honey and pistachios.

Scallop Ceviche and Mango with Coconut Milk

Servings: 8

Ingredients:

- 1 pound scallops, cleaned and drained
- Juice of 1 orange
- 4 spoonfuls rice vinegar
- 1/4 purple onion, chopped
- 3/4 cup mango, cut in thin cubes
- 2 1/4 cup jalapeño peppers, finely chopped
- 2 Maggi® cilantro flavored bouillon cubes
- 5 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 cup coconut milk
- 2 Maggi® onion and garlic flavored bouillon cubes
- 3 tablespoons white sesame seeds
- 1/2 ripe avocado, sliced in thin layers
- 8 leaves of lettuce hearts, washed and cleaned

This snack is very refreshing and delicious. It can also be prepared with shrimp or any other type of fish.

— Erika Villarreal

Preparation:

Marinate the scallops with the juice of the orange and the rice vinegar. When they are cooked, drain and keep the juice aside. Add the onion, mango, jalapeño, cilantro flavored bouillon, oil and the coconut milk slowly. Season with the onion and garlic flavored bouillons. Cover with plastic wrap, refrigerate and let cool so the flavors can mix in.

Serve the ceviche sprinkled with the sesame seeds and decorated with the avocado slices in lettuce hearts.

Advice

To give it an elegant touch, add a tablespoon of powdered ginger to the marinade.





Chorizo Stuffed Tomato

This recipe looks pretty and elegant. The tomato gives it a delicious taste and the aroma is something out of this world.

— Erika Villarreal

Servings: 8

Ingredients:

- 6 firm large tomatoes
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 8 ounces raw chorizo
- 1 medium onion, thinly sliced
- 2 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
- 2 celery sticks, thinly sliced
- 1 poblano pepper or green pepper, thinly sliced
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 4 tablespoons cilantro, chopped
- 1/2 cup seasoned breadcrumbs
- 1 cup pepper jack cheese, grated
- 1/4 cup Parmesan cheese, grated

Preparation:

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Cut 1/3 of each tomato off to open them. Using a spoon, scoop the inside of the tomatoes out, including the seeds. Chop the tops off the tomatoes and set aside. In a medium non-stick saucepan over medium heat, brown the chorizo with the olive oil. Use a wooden spoon to break the chorizo in pieces. When it's golden, add the onion and cook until it softens, stirring every now and then. Add the garlic, celery and poblano pepper. Let cook for another 2 minutes, stirring to mix well. Add the chopped tomatoes, salt, pepper, and cook for another minute. Remove the pan from the heat and add 3 tablespoons of cilantro, breadcrumbs and pepper jack cheese. Using a large spoon, stuff each tomato with plenty of mixture. Sprinkle the top with Parmesan cheese and place in a greased ovenproof dish. Bake for 20 minutes until the cheese is golden brown. Garnish with the remaining cilantro and serve.

This recipe is from my husband's country, Uruguay. Uruguayan empanadas are generally made out of flour and can be fried or baked. They were introduced by the Spanish and Italian settlers in the middle of the 20th century. The most common empanadas are those with beef, but there are also other kinds, such as ham and cheese, olives, fish and spicy stuffing. The empanadas are any time, any season food.

Preparation:

For the dough

Combine water, eggs and egg whites and mix together. Add flour and salt, mix and then knead together. Roll out the dough, cut into 6-inch rounds. Makes about 24 empanada rounds.

For the filling

Put the oil in a saucepan on medium heat and add the bacon (cook until crunchy). Add the onion (cook until golden brown). Add green pepper and sofrito and cook on low-medium. Now add the seasoned beef and garlic and mix everything. Cook on medium heat for about 15 minutes and add the tomato sauce. Mix and cook on low for a couple of minutes. Add the olives and hard-boiled eggs. When cooked, cool it down, take empanada round and place about a tablespoon of meat filling on top. Fold dough round over top of mixture until the round turns into a half-moon shape. Pinch ends and then fold end over to seal the half-moon dough. Place empanadas on pan. Bake in oven at 375 degrees for 25 to 30 minutes or until golden brown. Serve and enjoy!

— Eileen Ortiz García

Empanadas Uruguayarriqueñas

Servings: 24 Empanadas

Ingredients:

For Empanada dough (masa)

1 cup water

2 eggs

2 egg whites

2 teaspoons salt

6 cups flour

For Empanada filling

2 teaspoons canola oil

3 strips bacon

1 medium white onion (chopped)

1/2 green bell pepper (chopped)

2 teaspoons sofrito puertorriqueño

1 chopped garlic clove

1 pound ground beef (seasoned)

Olives

4 hard-boiled eggs

2 tablespoons tomato sauce





Family traditions start at home and follow you for years to come. Growing up in Buffalo, New York, football and chicken wings went hand in hand. I remember the best tailgate parties ever! A dish that was always a hit was Frank's® RedHot® Dip. It was a great way to enjoy chicken wings without the mess. This dip is a crowd pleaser that you won't want to be without at your next tailgate or party. Enjoy!

— Liz Sabo

Ingredients:

- 8-ounce package cream cheese, softened
- 1/2 cup blue cheese or ranch salad dressing
- 1/2 cup any flavor Frank's® RedHot® Sauce
- 1/2 cup crumbled blue cheese or shredded mozzarella cheese
- 2 cans (12.5 ounces each) Swanson® White Premium Chunk Chicken Breast in Water, drained

Preparation:

Heat oven to 350 degrees. Place cream cheese into deep baking dish. Stir until smooth. Mix in salad dressing, Frank's® RedHot® Sauce and cheese. Stir in chicken. Bake 20 minutes or until mixture is heated through; stir. Garnish as desired. Serve with crackers or vegetables.



Ceviche Cocktail



This fantastic ceviche dish combines fresh seafood and a spicy kick to create the perfect cocktail of flavors. For those of you who find yourselves frequently in need of a quick dish to entertain, this is a yummy refreshment that's easy to make – without actually feeling like you've had to cook anything! I recommend serving with a glass of sangria to create the perfect party dish.

— Meghan Stephens

Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup plus 2 tablespoons fresh lime juice
- 1 generous pound unpeeled shrimp
- 1/2 medium white onion, chopped into 1/4-inch pieces
- 1/3 cup chopped fresh cilantro, plus several sprigs for garnish
- 1/2 cup ketchup
- 2 tablespoons Mexican bottled hot sauce
- About 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 1 cup diced peeled cucumber
- 2 ripe avocados, peeled, pitted and cubed
- Sea salt
- Several lime slices for garnish
- Tortilla chips

Preparation:

Cooking and marinating the shrimp

Bring 1 quart salted water to a boil and add 2 tablespoons of the lime juice. Scoop in the shrimp, cover and let the water return to the boil. Immediately remove from the heat, set the lid askew, and pour off all the liquid. Replace the cover and let the shrimp steam off the heat for 10 minutes. Spread out the shrimp in a large glass or stainless steel bowl to cool completely. Peel and devein the shrimp if you wish. One by one lay the shrimp on your work surface; make a shallow incision down the back and scrape out the (usually) dark intestinal tract. Toss the shrimp with the remaining 1/2 lime juice, cover and refrigerate for about an hour.

The flavorings

In a small strainer, rinse the onion under cold water, then shake off the excess liquid. Add to the shrimp bowl along with the cilantro, ketchup, hot sauce, optional olive oil, cucumber and/or jicama and avocado. Taste and season with salt, usually about 1/2 teaspoon. Cover and refrigerate if not serving immediately.

Serving the ceviche

Spoon the ceviche into martini glasses and garnish with sprigs of cilantro, slices of lime, and tortilla chips for scooping. Enjoy!

Ingredients:

- 2 pounds boneless pork
- 4-5 cups water or vegetable broth
- 1/2 cup lard (oil can be substituted with different results)
- 3-4 dried ancho chiles (or other similar chile)
- 1/2 an onion
- 1/2 teaspoon cumin
- 1 tablespoon oregano
- 3 cloves garlic
- 1 teaspoon salt

Preparation:

In a large pot, simmer the pork in the water or broth, covered, for 2 hours. During the last 20 minutes of cooking take out enough liquid to cover the dried chiles in a bowl. Let the chiles soak in the liquid until they are soft, then remove the stems and seeds. When the pork is done simmering, drain off the liquid, reserving 1 cup. Cook the onions in the lard until translucent. In a blender, add the chiles, onions, spices and reserved liquid. Drain most of the lard from the pot and put the pork in the pan with the blended chile sauce and simmer for 10 minutes to thicken and bring the flavors together. Before you serve the pork make it bite-size.

Make the tacos using corn or flour tortillas. Be sure to add cilantro and some fresh onion. Enjoy!

Tacos de Chilorio

Chilorio is a pork dish from the state of Sinaloa in Mexico. It is also sometimes made with beef or chicken.

— Rogelio Cota



Fried corn sticks are a common appetizer in Puerto Rico. It is a fun family event to make sorullitos with the kids, and eat them right away. Sorullitos make a great appetizer and can also be dipped in syrup for a sweet snack. Sorullitos are made all year round, but they're also fun to make during traditional Christmas/holiday time parrandas and throughout family festive events.

— Vanessa Colón

Servings: Recipe yields 50 sticks

Ingredients:

- 2 cups water
- 1 1/4 teaspoons salt
- 1 1/2 cups yellow cornmeal
- 5 tablespoons white sugar, or to taste (optional)
- 4 ounces Edam or Cheddar cheese, shredded (in Puerto Rico they use Queso de Bola)
- 2 cups oil for deep frying



Sorullitos
de Maíz (Corn
Sticks)

Preparation:

Prep Time: 20 minutes

Cook Time: 15 minutes

Ready In: 35 minutes

Combine the water and salt in a saucepan, and bring to a boil. Remove from heat, and stir in the cornmeal and sugar. Return to medium heat and cook, stirring constantly until the mixture pulls away from the sides of the pan. Remove from heat, and stir in the Edam cheese until well blended.

Roll tablespoonfuls of the cornmeal mixture into balls. Then roll the balls into small fat sticks about 3 inches long. Heat oil in a large heavy skillet to 375 degrees until hot but not smoking. Carefully place some of the corn sticks into the oil so they are not crowded. Fry until golden brown on all sides, 3 to 4 minutes. Remove from hot oil, and drain on paper towels. Serve immediately!

**Pesto, Sun-dried
Tomatoes and
Creamy Swiss Dip**

Merry
Christmas

This is a very easy recipe that can be enjoyed on any occasion. Every time we get together, my family requests it. I hope you like it!

— Verónica Szabó

Servings: 8 - 10

Ingredients:

- 2 containers creamy Swiss cheese (preferably The Laughing Cow brand) at room temperature
- 1/2 cup sun-dried tomatoes
- 1/2 cup pesto sauce

Preparation:

To make your own pesto sauce

You will need fresh basil leaves, pine nuts, salt, pepper and olive oil. Take a handful of basil leaves (without the stems) and place them in a food processor. Add pine nuts, salt and pepper. Turn on the food processor and add the olive oil until all the ingredients are mixed well. Do not add too much olive oil as the pesto will become too runny and will not work well with the rest of the ingredients for the dip.

To make the dip

Take a small bowl and line it with plastic wrap. Take a few of the creamy Swiss cheese pieces and mash them at the bottom of the bowl creating a layer. Use more cheese if you feel the layer is too thin. Create another layer by adding the pesto sauce. Repeat the cheese layer again, and make it a bit thicker this time. If the sun-dried tomatoes are too big, cut them in small pieces. Add them to create another layer. Use the remainder of the cheese to create the last layer. Make sure this layer is the thickest one as it will serve as your base layer. Refrigerate until ready to serve. When you are ready to serve, flip the bowl over onto a serving tray and remove the plastic wrap. Serve with crackers.

Quesadilla Salvadoreña

Merry Christmas

Preparation:

- Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
- Sift the flour and baking powder together into a bowl. Add the cheese, sugar, eggs and milk to a large bowl and beat until smooth.
- Stir in the melted butter. Slowly stir the flour mixture into the cheese mixture until fully incorporated and a smooth batter is formed. Pour the batter into two well-greased loaf pans, filling them only halfway. If using, sprinkle sesame seeds over the top of the batter. Bake for 20 to 25 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted into the middle comes out clean. Set on racks and allow to come to room temperature before slicing and serving.

Salvadoran quesadilla is similar by name to the Mexican quesadilla, but different in everything else. Salvadoran quesadilla is a rich, sweet dessert cake. The queso in quesadilla is traditionally unsalted Salvadoran queso fresco, a fresh farmers-type cheese. But Parmesan cheese is often substituted. There's a funny story behind quesadillas for my siblings and me. Growing up, quesadillas were eaten in abundance and very often in El Salvador. Well, with one exception: my siblings and I back in El Salvador. My parents tried making us eat them, but as kids we didn't like the taste. Every time they tried, we refused. Over and over, they tried with no luck. Well, that eventually changed as we got older. But the funny thing is, according to my parents, there is a photo that exists of a time where they forced us to eat it and we weren't too happy about that. We eventually made Christmas cards with the photo. Hope you enjoy.

— Walter Barraza

Servings: 10 - 12

Ingredients:

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/2 pound grated queso fresco or Parmesan cheese
- 2 cups sugar
- 4 eggs, lightly beaten
- 1 cup whole milk
- 2 sticks (1/2 pound) butter, melted
- 2 tablespoons sesame seeds (optional)



WORRIES
GO DOWN
BETTER
WITH SOUP.

Soups & Beans

My entire family loves these beans because they have a lot of sauce. We love to eat them as a snack-appetizer, and we usually have them with corn tortilla chips. It's not a custom to eat them all the time, as charro and ranchero beans are, but they have a delicious flavor, and they taste even better with Maseca tortillas.

— Erika Villarreal

Servings: 8

Ingredients:

- 2.2 pounds cooked beans
- 1.10 pounds pork chorizo
- 1.10 pounds Chihuahua cheese, grated
- 1/4 cup pork shortening
- 5.30 ounces bacon

Preparation:

Blend or fry the beans. Fry the chopped bacon, then the chorizo. Add the beans. Stir for about 30 minutes, being careful not to let the mixture stick. Lastly, add the grated cheese and mix for 10 more minutes.

Frijoles
Puercos
(Dirty Beans)



Good-to-the-last-drop Kale Soup

Servings: 8 large servings

Ingredients:

Olive oil

2-6 cloves garlic, minced (to taste)

1 large onion, sliced

1 large bunch kale, chopped into thin ribbons

3/4 – 1 pound link pork or kielbasa sausage, sliced

2 large potatoes

2 boxes chicken broth

Fresh black pepper to taste



At one of my favorite lunch spots just a few blocks away from Lopez Negrete, I discovered a Portuguese soup called Caldo Verde. Since the soup contained kale (very healthy!) and was so delicious, I decided to try my hand at making it. As a mom, I am always looking to make my recipes more nutritious but need to ensure the food is tasty enough so my 20-month-old son doesn't put up a fight at dinner. Below is my family's version of Caldo Verde. Though we've added a lot more kale and cut back on the number of potatoes in our version of this soup, we've also significantly increased the amount of sausage included. Not sure that we can claim that it's "healthier," but I've finally found a way to get my son to eat kale without putting up a fight!

— Jennifer Gee

Preparation:

In one pot, boil potatoes. Purée potatoes with roughly 1/3 of chicken broth. (Note: This does not need to be completely puréed. Small chunks of potatoes in the purée are okay.) In a second pot, sauté garlic and onions in olive oil. Add sausage and sauté until sausage has browned. Add remaining chicken broth, kale, generous amounts of pepper. Boil until kale stems are reasonably soft – roughly 30 minutes on high heat. Add potato/chicken broth mixture and heat thoroughly.

Ringer Chicken Tinola is a 19th century Filipino dish with a modern variation. This is a traditional comfort food from my family for three generations and counting. My wife learned this dish from my mother and it is perfect for the sniffles season or to settle an upset tummy. It can either be an appetizer or a meal by itself. Maligayang Pasko!

— Joel Ringer

Ringer Chicken Tinola

Servings: 6

Ingredients:

- 6 pieces chicken (mixed pieces)
- 1 bag fresh spinach (preferably from Farmer Brad's garden)
- Half an onion (diced)
- Half a head of garlic (minced)
- 2 teaspoons chicken buijon
- 6 - 8 cups water
- Spoonful olive oil
- 2 tablespoons fresh ginger root (chopped)
- Pinch of salt
- 1 teaspoon pepper

Preparation:

Heat oil and sauté garlic, onion and ginger. Add the chicken and sauté it along with the garlic, onion and ginger mix for 5 minutes. Add the water and bring to a boil. Add salt, pepper and the chicken buijon. Lower the temperature; let simmer until chicken is cooked. Add in the spinach, and turn stove off. Serve hot with steamed rice and soy sauce to season.



Salmorejo



This is a typical Andalusian recipe. It is basically a thicker, heartier version of gazpacho, and its preparation varies in every household. This is my version:

— Maria Arnedo

Servings: 4

Ingredients:

About 8 ounces bread (you can use bread from the previous day)
2 big, ripe tomatoes
1/2 green bell pepper
2 garlic cloves
1/3 cup extra virgin olive oil
Salt and pepper to taste
Toppings of your choice: croutons, diced boiled egg, crumbled Manchego cheese or jamón serrano

Preparation:

Soak the bread in water. In the meantime, prepare the rest of the ingredients. Remove the stem of the tomatoes and the seeds from the bell pepper. Wring the excess of water from the bread. Mix all the ingredients in the blender until you have a thick purée. Top with your favorite garnishes and enjoy!



THE GIFTS OF
TIME AND LOVE
ARE BASIC
INGREDIENTS FOR
THE HOLIDAYS.

Main Dishes

For us this is a typical Mexican dish packed with flavor. The first time I ate it my mother had prepared it for some family friends who were visiting from Puebla. This dish is originally from there. And now we enjoy it very much because its presentation is beautiful and it tastes delicious. If you look at it, its colors are the same as the Mexican flag – green, white and red. Just recently at my engagement, we decided to have a variety of typical, yet elegant foods at the party, and this was one of the dishes I chose.

— Erika Villarreal



Servings: 8

Ingredients:

For the stuffing

- 10.5 ounces ground beef
- 10.5 ounces ground pork loin
- 2 thinly sliced garlic cloves
- 1/4 cup thinly sliced onion
- 4 tablespoons corn oil
- 2 apples, 2 pears and 2 peaches, peeled and sliced in cubes
- 1 handful raisins
- 1 handful chopped walnuts
- 1 handful pink or white pine nuts
- 1 candied prickly pear cactus sliced in cubes or one teaspoon orange peels
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon grated nutmeg
- Salt and pepper





Chiles en nogada (Chile Peppers in Walnut Sauce)

Preparation:

First of all, choose 12 poblano peppers in good shape and place them directly on the grill, turning them over so they'll roast uniformly. Remove them from the fire and place them in a sealed plastic bag so they can sweat. Remove their skin carefully so they won't break. Make an incision on the side of the peppers and remove the veins and seeds with a knife.

In a big saucepan heat the oil; add the onion and the sliced garlic until they turn clear. Add the ground meat and cook until brown. Add the apple, pear and peach, and cook a few more minutes. Add the walnuts, pine nuts and raisins, then the prickly pear cactus or orange peel. Season with salt and pepper, and when everything is well cooked, add the sugar. Let cool and stuff the peppers with the mix.

Batter

5 ounces flour
8 eggs
3 cups oil or shortening
Salt to taste

Separate the yolks from the whites and lightly whisk the yolks. Whisk the whites until soft peaks form. Combine the whites and yolks by folding them so you won't lose any of the volume, and add the salt. Place the flour in a bowl and cover every stuffed pepper. Then submerge them in the egg mix and fry them in hot oil or shortening. Drain them well and place them over paper towels.

Nogada (sauce)

3.5 ounces peeled almonds
7 ounces peeled walnuts
10.5 ounces goat cheese poblano style
(may be substituted by half double cream cheese and half goat cheese)
Milk
1/2 teaspoon sugar

Blend all the ingredients, slowly adding the milk until you reach the desired creamy consistency (it should not be too thick, but also not thin enough to see the pepper through it after pouring on top).

To garnish

1 cup flat leaf or Italian parsley, finely chopped
2 pomegranates, seeded
Nogada sauce

Place the peppers on a serving platter. Cover them in the sauce and garnish with the parsley and pomegranate seeds. They can be served at room temperature or can be heated a bit, but the nogada sauce can be served at room temperature or cold; it shouldn't be heated.

Piña Colada Chicken Tacos

Merry
Christmas

The only thing I can say about these is that they're finger-licking good. The first time I ate them was in Mexico City from a little street cart and I liked them so much that I shared the recipe with my family and now we claim it as ours.

— Erika Villarreal



Servings: 4

Ingredients:

- 4 thin chicken breasts sliced in 1/2-inch strips
- 2 tablespoons canola oil
- 4 whole grain tortillas

Marinade

- 1/2 tablespoon paprika
- 1 tablespoon fresh grated ginger
- 1 tablespoon honey
- 1 tablespoon fresh thyme
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
- 3 tablespoons rum (aged 8 yrs.) (1 tablespoon for the marinade and 2 tablespoons to deglaze the pan)
- 1 garlic clove, chopped
- Juice of 1 orange
- Salt and pepper to taste

Pineapple Sauce

- 1 cup pineapple cut in squares
- 1 cup cucumber, peeled, without seeds and cut in squares
- 1/8 purple onion cut in thin slices
- 2 tablespoons Italian parsley, chopped
- 1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- Salt and pepper to taste

Cream

- 1 Haas avocado, mashed
- 1/2 cup light sour cream
- Salt and pepper to taste

Piña Colada Chicken Tacos

Preparation:

Combine the ingredients for the marinade in a medium bowl. Add the chicken strips and let marinate 1-2 hours in the refrigerator. In the meantime, prepare the pineapple sauce. In a medium bowl, combine the pineapple, cucumber, onion, parsley, vinegar, oil, and season with salt and pepper. Set it aside for 30 minutes. To prepare the cream, combine the avocado with the sour cream and mix well. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Heat up the canola oil in a large pan over medium heat. Add the chicken and let cook for about 3 minutes on one side. Flip the chicken and cook for another 3-4 more minutes. Transfer the chicken onto a plate and add the rum to the hot pan. Use a wooden spoon to scrape the tortillas, pineapple sauce and cream. Serve with



Cold Turkey

Ingredients:

One turkey
12 minced garlic cloves
7 ripe oranges
1 cup olive oil
2 teaspoons oregano
3 teaspoons sea salt

Preparation:

Let the turkey out of the freezer 24 hours. Make a concoction using all the ingredients above mentioned. Blend them together. Get a turkey syringe and inject the bird in every region of its body. Let the turkey sit inside the fridge for another 24 hours to absorb the juices. Turn the oven up to about 400 degrees and braise the turkey for 20 minutes. Then lower the temperature to 200 degrees for the rest of the roasting time, which should be about 8-10 hours. Let the turkey sit at room temperature for 15 hours. It will be coldish and incredibly delicious.
Have a great holiday season!



This recipe was created out of a huge misunderstanding. My mother is not a good cook and dad had broken both of his arms trying to stop a bus from running over a kitten. So we all decided to spend Christmas Eve at my aunt's. We had a good time and we took turns feeding dad while he told us one joke after another. The only odd thing about the evening was my aunt's absence. But my uncle was there and we were all having a great time till late in the evening. Later that night, when we finally arrived back home, we noticed that the lights in the house were on. As we walked in, we saw my aunt sitting all alone at the dinner table. It was clear she was not happy. Placed in the center of the set table was a beautifully prepared, twenty-pound, cold turkey. She had spent all day preparing it. At first, she refused to talk to us, so she sang (don't ask). As the final note of her last song faded, she said we had all agreed to meet at our place, not hers, for Christmas. In our defense, we told her she should have called! To which she replied, "I would have, but my hands were too busy cooking!" So dad, with his two stiff arms, gave her a big symbolic hug. Mom decided we should honor her sister's cooking and eat again. So we all sat down at the table and had a second Christmas Eve dinner...cold turkey. And, even though we were already stuffed, we ate and ate and ate a fantastically delicious turkey. Enjoy!
— Federico Traeger



Walnut Spaghetti

Ingredients:

Spaghetti
Walnuts
Pimientos
Garlic
Parsley, chopped
Olive oil

Preparation:

Set water to boil for spaghetti. Toast walnuts briefly in sauté pan. Remove and set aside. Add olive oil to pan. Add pimientos, chopped or crushed garlic to taste, and sauté briefly. Add walnuts back in, then al dente spaghetti and parsley. Combine all until heated through. Salt and pepper to taste. It's easy, different and good!



Spaghetti a different way.
— Diane Lowrey





Victoria's Beef Stir Fry with Peanut Sauce

Like every Latina Millennial Cultural Freestyler, my daughter is a Master Fusionist. She enjoys cooking and baking and one cultural way of cooking she has incorporated into her culinary life is Asian cuisine, specifically, Chinese food. She bought a Chinese cookbook several years ago and mastered several of the recipes, but this one happens to be a family favorite that she prepares which cooks up quickly and is quite delicious. In fact, she has it memorized and no longer needs the recipe. Plus, it's an easy dish she prepares in her college kitchen for herself and friends.

— Ed Cantu



Servings: 4

Ingredients:

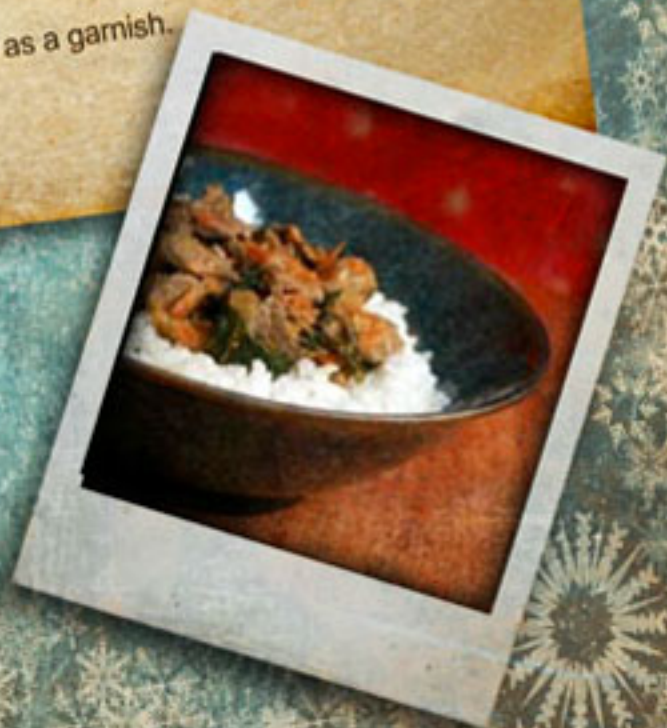
- 1 cup carrots, sliced or chopped
- 2 cups broccoli, cut into pieces
- 1 cup mushrooms, sliced or chopped if large
- Fresh garlic – 2 (or to taste), peeled and chopped
- 1 pound of steak, sliced thinly
- 1/4 cup soy sauce
- 4 tablespoons peanut butter
- 1/4 cup water
- 1/4 cup grape juice (wine may be substituted)
- 1/2 teaspoon ginger powder
- 1 tablespoon vegetable or olive oil

Victoria's Beef Stir Fry with Peanut Sauce

Preparation:

Coat pan with oil, then set burner to medium heat. Brown garlic lightly, then add beef, cooking and stirring occasionally until the meat is brown and evenly cooked (do not drain beef liquid from the pan). Add some of the vegetables and cook and stir until the harder vegetables begin to soften. Add peanut butter into the pan, and stir to mix until it is evenly incorporated. The sauce will be very thick at this point. Next, add the water, the grape juice or wine, the soy sauce, and stir to mix. Make sure there is enough liquid to cover the bottom of the pan and evenly coat the meat and vegetables. Sprinkle the ginger over all the ingredients and stir to mix. Cover the pan and let simmer until the sauce reaches the consistency you like. This dish is very good served over rice. Other vegetables can be added to suit your taste, such as bok choy, Chinese cabbage, bell peppers, bamboo shoots and water chestnuts.

For a special treat, add unsalted, crushed peanuts on top as a garnish.



Oven Baked Brisket

Ingredients:

- 1 4-pound untrimmed brisket (leaving the fat is crucial to the juiciness and taste)
- 2 tablespoons salt
- 2 tablespoons black pepper
- 2 teaspoons cayenne
- 4 cloves garlic, crushed
- 1 onion cut into slivers
- 1/4 cup soy sauce
- 1/8 cup Worcestershire sauce
- 1/4 cup liquid smoke plus an additional 1/4 cup. (Stubb's liquid smoke can be found in most Whole Foods)
- 1/4 cup black coffee
- 1/4 cup apple cider vinegar
- 1 or 2 fresh jalapenos, sliced



I stumbled upon this recipe on a quest to challenge my culinary skills. I always envisioned brisket as being difficult to cook and not necessarily "worth it," especially considering I spent some years in the mecca of BBQ: Central Texas. After sinking my teeth into my subsequent creation, I felt blasphemous. Did I really just slow cook the best brisket I have ever tasted in my life? Did I create something this phenomenal without much work or a giant smoker? Why, yes. Yes, I did. Tried and true through several attempts and audiences, I am proud to share (with a few modifications) the recipe for the juiciest and most flavorful brisket that I have ever had.

— Francisco Aguera

Servings: 15

Cooking time: 8:20 hours

Preparation:

Preheat your oven to 250 degrees. Mix together the salt, black pepper, cayenne and crushed garlic, and rub all over your brisket (more heavily on the meatier side but also a bit on the fat side as well). Allow the brisket to come to room temperature. In a large roasting pan, add the slivered onions, soy sauce, Worcestershire sauce, 1/4 cup of the liquid smoke, 1/4 cup black coffee, 1/4 cup apple cider vinegar and half the sliced jalapenos. Place the brisket in the pan, fat side up, and sprinkle the remaining jalapenos on top of the brisket. Cover the pan tightly with foil, and bake in the oven for 4 hours. After 4 hours, if you want a more pronounced smoky taste, pour another 1/4 cup of the liquid smoke over the brisket. Otherwise, just continue cooking for another 1 hour and 5 minutes per pound of brisket. Take the brisket out of the oven. It should be tender to the touch. Let it sit out of the pan for half an hour, and then trim the fat on top and slice against the grain. Keep the sauce to pour over the slices. Enjoy!

★
Scampi Gregoire
avec Grits
Extraordinaire
Gastronomique pour
Deux Personnes

Merry Christmas



Servings: 2

Ingredients:

1 pound large shrimp in shells (16 to 20 per pound)

1 cup quick grits

2 cups water, 1/2 cup cream

1 pound butter

2 ounces sherry

1/2 cup parsley

3 cups spinach

1/2 tomato sliced

8 pieces bacon

Black pepper

Recipe by Greg Bartley

Scampi Gregoire avec Grits Extraordinaire Gastronomique pour Deux Personnes

Preparation:

Wash shrimp, leaving shell on, and place in baking dish. Melt butter and pepper in saucepan until black (you cannot use too much pepper). Pour melted butter/pepper on top of shrimp and place in preheated 375-degree oven. Bake for 32 minutes (if the shrimp are not completely covered in butter, you must turn the shrimp over after 16 minutes). At the same time, cook bacon in oven in a drip pan (to drain grease) for the same 32 minutes.

After placing shrimp and bacon in oven, cook the grits. Bring water and cream to a boil; stir in grits – takes about 20 minutes. Twenty minutes after placing shrimp into oven, lightly parboil spinach, for two minutes. Take out of water and drain on paper towel just before serving.

Place grits on plate, then scoop shrimp from baking dish and remove shells (it is important to bake in shell – it allows just the correct amount of butter/pepper mixture to soak into the shrimp without making the shrimp soggy). Place shelled shrimp on top of grits; add the sherry and fresh sliced tomatoes (can be brushed with olive oil) and a touch of fresh parsley for garnish. I suggest a bottle of Santa Margarita Pinot Grigio to complement this fine meal. I can guarantee a special night with this meal!!! Bon Appetit!!!



Pasta. Pasta. Pasta. The food of the gods. For me, there is nothing more comforting and "homey" than a bowl of hot and buttery pasta smothered in my homemade tomato sauce (and a glass of good red wine to wash it down, of course).

I've loved to cook since I was a little girl. I remember coming from school and smelling my mom's wonderful cooking from one block away. It was my passion until I had to do it as a chore (I had a catering business a few years ago), when it lost all its "glamour." But anyway, I still love to cook. Love the smell of the spices and the faces of friends and family enjoying my cooking.

This sauce has been developed over years of trial and error, so it's foolproof, guaranteed. I make a large batch and freeze it in small containers, so I always have salsa for pasta, pizza, lasagna, Chicken Parmesan, or any other dish that calls for tomato sauce. And my family loves it.

There is a secret to the making of my salsa. It may sound a little weird, but it will make all the difference. You **MUST** let the tomato base burn in the bottom of your pan. Not really BURN to ashes, but to stick and make a very dark film on the bottom. That's what gives it a strong, hearty and distinctive flavor. I recommend using a cast-iron saucepan.

— Isabel López-Machado

Isa's Tomato Sauce



Servings: Makes about five 16-ounce containers

Ingredients:

- Olive oil
- 4 big cans petite diced tomatoes
- 1 big can tomato sauce
- 1 tablespoon oregano
- 4 garlic cloves
- Fresh basil (optional)
- 1/2 cup ketchup or 2 tablespoons sugar
- 2 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
- Red wine (and pour some in the sauce, too). NO COOKING WINE, please. If you can't drink it, you can't cook with it either.
- Salt and pepper to taste

Preparation:

Strain the tomatoes well and save the liquid. Sauté them in the olive oil at medium high and let them dry completely. It will reduce a lot and will form a thick, dark paste that will stick to the bottom of the pan. That's good. Open a little hole in the center of this paste, pour a little more olive oil and sauté the oregano, the garlic and the pepper there. That will bring out those flavors to another level.

Pour in the liquid you saved from the tomatoes, the tomato sauce and approximately 1/2 cup of your favorite red wine. Add the ketchup or the sugar and the Worcestershire sauce. Scratch the bottom of the pan with a wooden spoon (that's called "deglaze"). If you want a more smooth sauce, without the little pieces of tomatoes in it, use a hand blender. Just immerse the blender in the pot and go in circles until all the pieces disappear. Cover and let simmer for an hour, or until desired consistency. If using basil, chop it and add it to the sauce at this time.

After the sauce has cooled, store it in individual containers and keep them in the freezer. It lasts for months. Makes about five 16-ounce containers. Buon Appetito.

Isa's Tomato Sauce



Growing up in Connecticut we would spend many winter weekends skiing in Vermont. One of our favorite meals was this throw-together meal – it can be cooked for 3 or 5 hours – great when you are out having fun, or if you want to stay in bed all day! A great upgrade from chili.

— Jane O'Dea

Servings: 6 - 8

Ingredients:

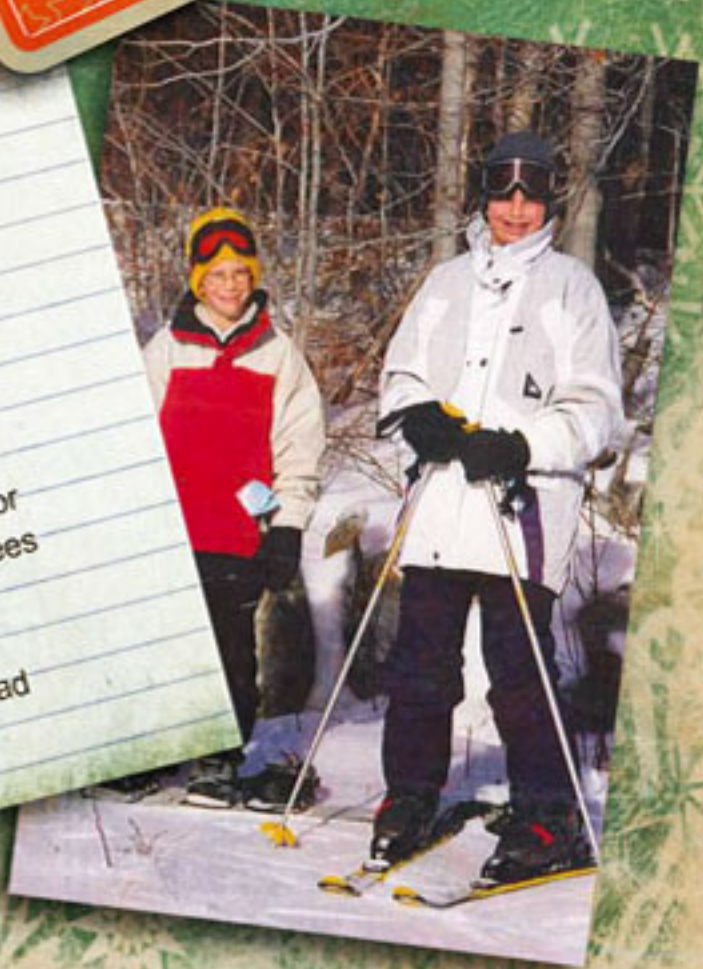
- 2 pounds lean stew beef
- 1 can baby peas
- 1 can or 2 medium potatoes (cut up)
- 1 can sliced carrots (fresh can be substituted)
- 1 can mushrooms
- 1 can Campbell's Tomato Soup
- 1/2 can water
- 1 bay leaf
- Salt and pepper to taste

Preparation:

Place all ingredients in a covered Dutch oven or casserole dish. Put into the oven at 275 degrees for 5 hours or 375 for 3 hours.

Remove bay leaf and serve with crusty bread and salad.

Trink's Stay-A-Bed Stew



The Ultimate Beef
Wellington with Green
Peppercorn Sauce 🎀



After weeks of watching "Hell's Kitchen" with the wife, we always wondered how difficult some of the cooking and recipes on that show must be. At each dinner service in "Hell's Kitchen" the main entrée of choice is, and always has been, Beef Wellington. In an effort to expand our cooking into more luxurious meals I looked up how to actually cook such a dish. It's probably a dish known and eaten by many, but on a tight budget you can make this at home with the right ingredients, time and patience. I give to you the main entrée of fine dining.

— Jason Remmert



The Ultimate Beef Wellington with Green Peppercorn Sauce

Ingredients:

For the duxelles

- 3 pints (1 1/2 pounds) white button mushrooms
- 2 shallots, peeled and roughly chopped
- 4 cloves garlic, peeled and roughly chopped
- 2 sprigs fresh thyme, leaves only
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

For the beef

- 1 (3-pound) center cut beef tenderloin (filet mignon), trimmed
- Extra virgin olive oil
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 12 thin slices prosciutto
- 6 sprigs fresh thyme, leaves only
- 2 tablespoons Dijon mustard
- Flour, for rolling out puff pastry
- 1 pound puff pastry, thawed if using frozen
- 2 large eggs, lightly beaten
- 1/2 teaspoon coarse sea salt
- Minced chives, for garnish
- Roasted fingerling potatoes
- Warm wilted winter greens

For the green peppercorn sauce

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 shallots, sliced
- 2 cloves garlic, peeled and smashed
- 3 sprigs fresh thyme, leaves only
- 1 cup brandy
- 1 box beef stock
- 2 cups cream
- 2 tablespoons grainy mustard
- 1/2 cup green peppercorns in brine, drained, brine reserved

The Ultimate Beef Wellington with Green Peppercorn Sauce



Servings: 6 – 8

Preparation:

To make the duxelles

Add mushrooms, shallots, garlic and thyme to a food processor and pulse until finely chopped. Add butter and olive oil to a large sauté pan and set over medium heat. Add the shallot and mushroom mixture and sauté for 8 to 10 minutes until most of the liquid has evaporated. Season with salt and pepper and set aside to cool.

To prepare the beef

Tie the tenderloin in 4 places so it holds its cylindrical shape while cooking. Drizzle with olive oil, then season with salt and pepper and sear all over, including the ends, in a hot, heavy-based skillet lightly coated with olive oil – about 2 to 3 minutes. Meanwhile set out your prosciutto on a sheet of plastic wrap (plastic needs to be about a foot and a half in length so you can wrap and tie the roast up in it) on top of your cutting board. Shingle the prosciutto so it forms a rectangle that is big enough to encompass the entire filet of beef. Using a rubber spatula cover evenly with a thin layer of duxelles. Season the surface of the duxelles with salt and pepper and sprinkle with fresh thyme leaves. When the beef is seared, remove from heat, cut off twine and smear lightly all over with Dijon mustard. Allow to cool slightly, then roll up in the duxelles-covered prosciutto using the plastic wrap to tie it up nice and tight. Tuck in the ends of the prosciutto as you roll to completely encompass the beef. Roll it up tightly in plastic wrap and twist the ends to seal it completely and hold it in a nice log shape. Set in the refrigerator for 30 minutes to ensure it maintains its shape.

The Ultimate Beef Wellington with Green Peppercorn Sauce



Preheat oven to 425 degrees.

On a lightly floured surface, roll the puff pastry out to about a 1/4-inch thickness. Depending on the size of your sheets you may have to overlap 2 sheets and press them together. Remove beef from refrigerator and cut off plastic. Set the beef in the center of the pastry and fold over the longer sides, brushing with egg wash to seal. Trim ends if necessary, then brush with egg wash and fold over to completely seal the beef, saving ends to use as a decoration on top if desired. Top with coarse sea salt. Place the beef seam side down on a baking sheet.

Brush the top of the pastry with egg wash. Then make a couple of slits in the top of the pastry using the tip of a paring knife – this creates vents that will allow the steam to escape when cooking. Bake for 40 to 45 minutes until pastry is golden brown and beef registers 125 degrees on an instant-read thermometer. Remove from oven and let rest before cutting into thick slices. Garnish with minced chives, and serve with green peppercorn sauce, roasted fingerling potatoes, and warm wilted winter greens.

To make the green peppercorn sauce

Add olive oil to pan after removing beef. Add shallots, garlic, and thyme; saute for 1 to 2 minutes, then, off heat, add brandy and flambé using a long kitchen match. After flame dies down, return to the heat, add stock and reduce by about half. Strain out solids, then add 2 cups cream and mustard. Reduce by half again, then shut off heat and add green peppercorns.

Chiles Rellenos Zacatecanos

Servings: 4

Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup chicken stock broth
- 1/2 cup water
- 8 fresh pasilla or poblano chiles
- 1 pound Monterey Jack cheese, cut into triangles
- 1/4 cup flour
- 6 raw eggs (separated by yolk and egg white)
- 2 roma tomatoes
- 1/2 onion
- 2 garlic gloves
- 2 jalapeño peppers
- Cotija cheese as desired
- 2 tablespoons consommé (tomato flavor)
- 1 cup corn oil
- Pinch of salt

On my last trip to my dad's hometown of Juchipila, Zacatecas, my now husband and I made the announcement that we were engaged. My tias then proceeded to ask me if I knew how to cook yet, whereupon I responded, "¿Se cuenta la pasta?" My tias' response: "¡Claro que no, flojal!" My Tía Chalo and Tía José then proceeded to schedule a time the very next day to teach me how to make my Abuelita Juanita's famous Chiles Rellenos so that my future husband could at least have one good meal a week.

— Jessenia Enriquez-Garcia



Chiles Rellenos Zacatecanos



Preparation:

Heat a comal on high heat. Rinse the chiles. Place the chiles on top of the comal (first on one side, then the other). Watch and listen closely. When the skins start to make popping sounds and to char, turn black in places, then flip chiles to one side and the other until the entire chile skin is charred. (You can use a pot holder so you don't burn your hands!)

When both sides are evenly charred, remove them from the oven. Wrap each chile in a moist paper towel or place in a sealed plastic bag to steam. After a few minutes, check them. Once the skin comes off easily, peel each chile.

Cut a slit almost the full length of each chile. Make a small "T" across the top, by the stem. Pull out fibers and seeds and replace with a slice of cheese. You can set these aside for a few minutes.

Whip the egg whites at high speed with an electric mixer, until stiff peaks have formed. Heat the oil in a skillet until a drop of water sizzles when dropped into the pan. Beat the egg yolks with one tablespoon flour and a pinch of salt. Mix the yolks into egg whites and stir until you have a thick paste. Roll the chiles in 1/4 cup flour and dip each one in the egg batter. Coat evenly. Fry, seam side down, on both sides until golden brown (about 1-2 minutes tops). Place on paper towels to drain.

Meanwhile, begin your salsa by heating a large pot of water to boil. Drop in your tomatoes, 1/2 onion, garlic and jalapeños and wait for tomatoes to appear tender and skin to peel. Remove and add to blender with 1/2 cup water and 1/2 cup chicken stock broth. Salt to taste. Blend at high speed for 30 seconds.

Re-heat leftover chile relleno corn oil (about 1/2 cup) and pour sauce over oil. Add consommé and heat to boil. Place one or two of the rellenos on a plate and pour salsa over them. Top with Cotija cheese.

Serve them immediately, preferably with refried beans (pinto or black)!

Apple Stuffed Chicken



My household is tricultural, so holiday celebrations can become tricky. I asked my mother-in-law to give me a recipe that I could use as an alternative to "stuffed bird" for Thanksgiving; she gave me this delicious Persian recipe that I like because it is good to impress your guests and is really easy to prepare. This recipe is even used on the Hispanic side of my family for certain occasions, even Thanksgiving (they use a turkey though ... your call).

Servings: 4-8

— Joanne Ortiz

Ingredients:

- 1 whole chicken
- 3 apples, diced in cubes
- 8-10 dried apricots, diced in cubes
- 1/2 finely diced white onion
- Handful walnuts or almonds
- 1 bag croutons
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 3 teaspoons sugar
- 1 teaspoon curry
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon chicken seasoning
- 5 tablespoons butter
- 1 chopped garlic clove
- 1/2 tablespoon chili powder
- Salt and pepper

Preparation:

Stuffing

Fry the diced onion in butter until golden brown. Add the diced apples and apricots. Add the cinnamon and sugar; fry 10 minutes. Add the walnuts (or almonds) and croutons. Remove from fire.

Chicken preparation

Melt the butter, place in a bowl and add the diced garlic, curry, chili powder, salt, pepper and chicken seasoning. Bathe the chicken with this mix. Place chicken in baking dish and fill the cavity with the stuffing. Place remaining stuffing around chicken and bake for 3 hours at 375 degrees.

Hallacas Venezolanas



Hallacas [ay-YAH-kahs]. When Venezuelans think of Christmas, the first thing that comes to mind is hallacas! Pernil (pork), pan de jamón (ham bread), and pavo (turkey) may follow. But hallacas are definitely at the top of the list as a distinct Christmas tradition. Each region of the country, and even each family, has their own styles and recipes. The base is a meaty stew, surrounded by a tender masa (dough), all wrapped up in banana leaves and steamed to perfection.

The hallaca can be seen as similar to the tamal present in other Latin American countries. It is typically larger, with more filling, along with a distinct taste and size due in part to the use of the hoja de cambur (banana leaf). The smoked banana leaf can be difficult to procure; as an alternative you may use corn husk or aluminum foil.

— Joaquin Lira

Ingredients:

Meat filling

- 1 pound top round beef, cut into 1/4-to-1/2-inch dice
- 1 pound lean pork, cut into 1/4-to-1/2-inch dice
- 1/4 pound bacon, strips cut into 1/2-inch lengths
- 3 medium tomatoes, peeled and seeded
- 1 onion, peeled
- 3 garlic cloves
- 1 tablespoon salt
- 2 teaspoons marjoram
- 1 medium leek, diced
- 1/4 cup capers
- 1 tablespoon mustard relish, pickle, minced
- 1/4 cup red wine vinegar
- 1 bell pepper, cut into 1/4-to-1/2-inch dice
- 1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1 1/2 tablespoons dark brown sugar
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- 1/2 cup raisins

Masa dough

- 2/3 cup lard or 2/3 cup vegetable shortening
- 1 teaspoon annatto seeds (achiote, optional for color)
- 2 cups masa harina flour (dehydrated, precooked corn flour – Harina Pan® is a common brand that can be found in Latino supermarkets)
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1 1/3 cups warm water

Final preparations

- Smoked banana leaves cut in 12-inch squares
[Options: 24 dried corn husks or 24 (10-inch squares parchment paper or tinfoil)]
- 1 pound shredded cooked chicken
- 4 hard-boiled eggs, sliced
- 1/4 cup blanched almonds
- 2 ounces pimientos, sliced
- 5 ounces pimiento stuffed olives, cut in half

Servings: 24

Hallacas Venezolanas



Hallacas Venezolanas



Preparation:

Meat filling

Put beef, pork and bacon in a large pan. Purée the tomatoes with the peeled onion and garlic. Add mixture to the meat pan along with the salt, marjoram and leek. Cover and bring to a boil. Lower heat and continue cooking until all meat is tender, about 2 hours. When meat is tender, add the capers, mustard pickles, vinegar, bell pepper, Worcestershire sauce, and sugar. Salt and pepper to taste. Raise the heat to high and cook the filling, stirring, until almost all liquid in the pan has evaporated, about 10 minutes. Add the raisins and set filling aside.

Masa dough

Over a low heat, melt 1/3 cup lard with the annatto seeds. Simmer 2 to 3 minutes. Whip remaining lard until fluffy. Beat in masa harina, salt, cayenne pepper, and water. Finally, beat in melted, strained lard, discarding annatto seeds. Form dough into 24 balls.

Final preparations

Put a ball of masa dough in the center of each pre-cut banana leaf or corn husk. Flatten dough out to 1/8-inch thickness. Top each masa-coated husk with an equal distribution of the meat mixture and then add morsels of the chicken, hard-cooked eggs, almonds, pimientos and olives. Fold over banana leaf first toward the center, and then down the sides, so as to completely encase the filling. Then wrap the outside with an additional leaf to help seal water out when boiling. Tie each hallaca with strips of kitchen string. When tightly assembled, steam hallacas for 1 hour. Serve piping hot.

NOTE: Hallacas are easily refrigerated or frozen. Reheat by steaming again until hot.

Beef Stroganoff is a dish consisting of strips of lean beef sautéed and served in a sour-cream sauce with onions and mushrooms. The recipe, which is of Russian origin, has been known since the eighteenth century, but its name appears to come from Count Paul Stroganoff, a nineteenth-century Russian diplomat. Legend has it that when he was stationed in deepest Siberia, his chef discovered that the beef was frozen so solid that it could only be coped with by cutting it into very thin strips.

— Julia Feldman

Servings: 4

Ingredients:

- 2 1/4 pounds beef (boneless)
- 4 tablespoons flour
- 4 tablespoons ketchup
- 5 ounces sour cream
- 2 cups broth
- 1 tablespoon flour pounded with butter
- 1 onion
- Salt and pepper to taste

Preparation:

Chop the meat lengthwise and beat the pieces a little. After that cut the pieces into strips a little less than 1/2 inch long and 1/4 inch wide. Season and roll them in flour. Fry chopped onion in the pan and when it is golden brown, put the strips in. Fry on high until the meat is light brown. Pour in beef broth and bring to a boil, stirring constantly. Cover and simmer for 1 hour or until the meat is tender.

Make a sauce: Fry 1 tablespoon flour pounded with butter for few minutes. Add sour cream, ketchup, salt. Pour the sauce over meat and stew on low heat for 15-20 minutes. Don't let sauce boil; otherwise the meat will be tough.

Beef Stroganoff is served with fried potatoes.

Beef Stroganoff



(My daughter coined it Yum Sauce the first time I served it.)

I have always enjoyed being creative in the kitchen. It's a passion I got watching my father "play" with his food. He's an amazing cook that always comes up with an inventive dish that's a crowd pleaser. You can imagine my glee each time he calls and says, "Now how did you make that again?"
— Kelley Bailey

Servings: 4

Ingredients:

- 4 tilapia filets
- 1 stick butter
- Tony Cachere Creole Seasoning
- 1 small onion
- 2 stalks celery
- 1 can Campbell's Cream of Mushroom Soup
- 1 small bag cocktail shrimp
(frozen, approximately 8 ounces)

Preparation:

Yum Sauce

Place 1/2 stick butter in skillet and heat. Dice onion and celery. Sauté until onion is translucent. Transfer onion and celery to a medium-size pot. Add mushroom soup and cocktail shrimp. Simmer until heated through, stirring occasionally. Add Tony Cachere seasoning to taste. We like it a little spicy.

Tilapia


Lightly season both sides of tilapia with Tony Cachere. Add remaining 1/2 stick butter to skillet that onion and celery were sautéed in. Heat skillet until it sizzles. Be careful; butter burns easily. Add tilapia. Cook on one side until a natural light crust begins to form (5 - 7 minutes). Flip and cook additional 5 to 7 minutes until thoroughly cooked.

Place single filet on plate and top with Yum Sauce. We serve with brown rice and green peas.





Japanese
Curry Rice



When I lived in Los Angeles, I made many Japanese friends. We would often go to downtown Los Angeles in a section of town called Japantown. I loved eating Japanese Curry Rice. I suppose that because Japanese curry is thicker and sweeter than Indian curry that it reminded me of stews my grandmother used to make. It should be noted that the curry is always served with a bed of rice. You can buy the roux pre-made at most international grocery stores to shorten the preparation time.

— Ken Morico

Japanese Curry Rice

Ingredients:

For the roux

- 3 tablespoons butter
- 1/4 cup flour
- 2 tablespoons garam masala (or curry powder)
- 1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper (add less if you want it mild or more if you want it spicy)
- Fresh ground black pepper
- 1 tablespoon ketchup (or tomato paste)
- 1 tablespoon tonkatsu sauce (or Worcestershire sauce)

For the curry

- 2 teaspoons oil
- 2 large onions sliced thin
- 2 pounds chicken thighs cleaned and cut into chunks (you could also use beef, shrimp, or tofu)
- 2 carrots cut into chunks
- 4 cups water
- 2 large Yukon Gold potatoes cut into large chunks
- 1 small apple peeled, cored and puréed (I use a microplane)
- 2 teaspoons kosher salt (use less if you use regular salt)
- 1 teaspoon garam masala
- 1/2 cup peas

Servings: 3

Preparation:

Heat the oil in a large saucepan over medium low heat and add the onions. Sauté the onions until they are golden brown and caramelized (about 30 minutes). Turn up the heat to high, add the chicken and brown.

Add the carrots and the water, then bring to a boil. Skim off any foam or oil that accumulates at the surface, then lower heat to medium and add the potatoes, puréed apple, salt and garam masala. Simmer for about 30 minutes or until you can pass a fork through the carrots and potatoes and the meat is tender.

For the roux, melt the butter over medium low heat. Add the flour and garam masala, stirring until you have a thick paste. Add the cayenne pepper and some fresh ground black pepper and incorporate into the roux. Add the ketchup and tonkatsu sauce and combine. Continue to cook until the paste starts crumbling. Remove from heat and set aside until the meat and veggies are ready.

To make the curry, just ladle about 2 cups of liquid into the roux, then whisk until it's smooth. Pour this mixture back into the other pot and gently stir until thickened. Add the peas and heat through. Serve over rice.

Acclaimed by both women and men, Chile Colorado has been one of the favorite dishes of northern Mexico for many years. But research shows that every Chile Colorado belongs in a burrito. So sit back, relax and enjoy this Chile Colorado Burrito recipe.

— Lalo Durán

Servings: 3-4

Ingredients:

Note: Use gloves to handle the chiles.

1 package (approximately 5-6) dried ancho chiles

32 ounces Kitchen Basics beef stock

3 pounds beef chuck (if fatty beef, cut into

1-inch cubes – if lean, 1/2-inch)

Olive oil

1 large onion, chopped

2-4 large cloves garlic, crushed and finely chopped

2 teaspoons ground cumin

3 tablespoons chili powder blend

Salt (don't overdo – this is a well-seasoned dish)

Preparation:

Remove stems and seeds from chiles and chop. Place in bowl, cover with boiling beef broth, and let stand for 30 minutes or until soft.

Heat oil in large soup/stock pot; add onion and cook, stirring constantly until soft and lightly browned. Add garlic and beef. Sauté until beef is cooked on the outside (no longer pink). Strain chiles from beef broth (do not discard broth – it is the stock for the chili). Add about 2 1/2 cups of chile soaking broth to beef pot. Add chili powder and cumin and heat to a low boil. Reduce heat and simmer uncovered, very low, for 1 hour, stirring occasionally.

Place chiles and remaining liquid in food processor, cover and blend until smooth. A little water can be added if needed to purée. Add mixture to beef and taste to adjust seasonings. Salt may be added now. Continue to cook, stirring occasionally until meat is fork tender. Serve over freshly made flour tortillas.



Chile Colorado
Meets Burrito

Once upon a time, this grandpa, who was a real Mexican Charro (Charrou in English), fell in love with his beans. He started cooking them every way possible. But one day, he started adding more ingredients. Finally, and after a lot of experiments, he made the authentic Charrou beans. His recipe traveled from generation to generation, from Charrou to Charrou. And now from me to you. Enjoy, and after you try them, don't forget to say Ajuaaaaaaa.

— Miguel Moreno

Ingredients:

1 pound dry pinto beans, sorted and rinsed
2 teaspoons salt

Water

1 clove garlic
3 pieces bacon, fried; reserve drippings
1 tomato, chopped
1 large Anaheim pepper, chopped
1/2 cup fresh cilantro leaves
1 onion, chopped

Preparation:

Put the beans, salt and garlic in a stock pot and cover with water about 3 inches above the beans. Cover and cook on medium-low heat for several hours or until the beans are tender and you have a rich-looking broth, stirring occasionally. Add some boiling water if needed during cooking. Cook the tomato, pepper, cilantro and onion in the reserved drippings until the onions are soft. Remove the garlic from the beans and add the vegetable mixture. Cut the bacon in small pieces and add to the beans. Mix well and let it set on the stove for 15 minutes before serving. This freezes well.

Grandpa's Charrou Beans Recipe



Chicken Adobo



This is considered the Philippine national dish. The combination of soy sauce, vinegar, garlic, ginger and peppercorns is delicious and actually preserves the chicken! Great for picnics. My mother taught me how to cook this, using her variation from the original recipe. A delicious, cheap and easy dish! Serve it hot with hot steamed Jasmine rice.

Servings: 6

— Perry Tongot

Ingredients:

- 1 (3 pound) whole chicken, cut into 8 pieces
- 1/2 cup soy sauce
- 3/4 cup distilled white vinegar
- 1 bulb garlic, peeled and crushed
- 2 tablespoons thinly sliced fresh ginger root
- 2 bay leaves
- 1/2 tablespoon black peppercorns

Preparation:

Combine the chicken, soy sauce, vinegar, garlic, ginger, bay leaves and peppercorns in a Dutch oven. Bring to a boil over medium heat. Once it boils, reduce heat to a simmer. Cover the pot and simmer for 30 minutes, basting the chicken occasionally. After 30 minutes, remove lid and cook until liquid has reduced to half.

Remove chicken from the pot to a serving plate. Strain the liquid from the pot to remove all the food particles, and set aside. Serve chicken hot over steamed rice and drizzle with reserved sauce

Chicken Tacos with Charred Tomatoes



This recipe is a quick and tasty dish that is super healthy. If you like things extra spicy like me, you can add a little more of the jalapeño and salsa on the side! Enjoy.

Servings: 2

— Preethi Mabbu

Ingredients:

- 2 plum tomatoes, cored
- 8 ounces boneless, skinless chicken breast trimmed of fat
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon freshly ground pepper
- 2 teaspoons canola oil, divided
- 1/2 cup finely chopped white onion
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 small jalapeño pepper, seeded and minced
- 2 teaspoons lime juice, plus lime wedges for garnish
- 2 teaspoons chopped fresh cilantro
- 2 scallions, chopped
- 6 small corn tortillas, heated

Preparation:

Heat a medium skillet over high heat until very hot. Add tomatoes and cook, turning occasionally with tongs, until charred on all sides, 8 to 10 minutes. Transfer to a plate to cool slightly. Cut the tomatoes in half crosswise; squeeze to discard seeds. Remove cores and chop the remaining pulp and skin.

Cut chicken into 1-inch chunks; sprinkle with salt and pepper. Add 1 teaspoon oil to the pan and heat over high heat until very hot. Add the chicken and cook, stirring occasionally, until it is browned and no longer pink in the middle, 3 to 5 minutes. Transfer to a plate.

Reduce the heat to medium and add the remaining 1 teaspoon oil. Add onion and cook, stirring, until softened, about 2 minutes. Add garlic and jalapeño and cook, stirring, until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Add lime juice, the chicken and tomatoes. Cook, stirring, until heated through, 1 to 2 minutes. Stir in cilantro and scallions. Divide the chicken mixture among tortillas. Serve with lime wedges.

The Cau Cau is a traditional Peruvian dish from the Creole menu, similar to the Italian tripe minestrone or the Mexican menudo; however, the Cau Cau is not a soup. As kids, my brother and I did not like the dish; however, all the adults loved it, and it was prepared on special occasions during big "Almuerzo" gatherings on Sundays. The Cau Cau is one of those dishes that as a kid you will not try but as you become an adult, you develop a taste for gourmet food and grow up to love it. My mother prepares Cau Cau about once every three months and we gather at her house like the adults used to when we were kids.

— Remo Mazzini

Servings: 4 - 6

Ingredients:

- 2-pound bag of tripe (Walmart)
- 2 large potatoes cut in squares
- 1 bag frozen chopped onions
- 1 small can Goya Ahi paste (Fiesta)
- 2 bunches parsley
- Turmeric
- Chopped garlic
- Salt
- Pepper
- 1 lime



Cau Cau



Preparation:

Boil the tripe with the parsley (use parsley leaves only) for 45 minutes. Take out the tripe and store the tripe broth. Cut the tripe in bite-size squares. In a little Mazola oil (not olive oil), fry the chopped onions with a tablespoon of garlic and a tablespoon of Ahi. Add salt and pepper, turmeric and the tripe. Fry all the above ingredients together and begin pouring the broth in small quantities. Stir until it catches a good yellow color. Add more Ahi and turmeric if desired. When the tripe cooks, add the potatoes, the second parsley bunch, and the lime. Serve accompanied by white rice.



Tacos Reloaded



It had been a long time since I had the opportunity to go to Mexico to visit my family during the holidays. Two years ago, my future wife Lily and I finally got the opportunity to go to Mexico City for New Year's Eve.

From the moment we bought the plane tickets, we were craving real authentic Mexico City tacos. We flew to Mexico on December 31st. We missed our morning flight so we had to wait until the evening flight to depart to my hometown city. By the time we got to Mexico, we were running late so we had to go directly to my uncle's house where the celebration was going to take place.

As a tradition, we always eat turkey on New Year's Eve, but I was tired of turkey since we had eaten so much of it a few days ago in Houston. I decided to go ahead and explore my uncle's refrigerator to cook my own tacos. (Yes! All my family looked at me like: What's wrong with this guy...haha.) I started to look and saw too many ingredients, so it gave me the idea to create my own tacos. I pulled out the following items: beef, ham, bacon, green pepper, onions, soy sauce and cheese.

I cooked all the ingredients together and added a little bit of soy sauce. I was able to find everything but one ingredient: "tortillas." It was unbelievable there were no tortillas at my uncle's house. We were starving and we were not going to try to see if there was a convenience store open during New Year's Eve; that was the moment when the IDEA came up. Cook the cheese until it melts and turns pre-crusty and use it as a tortilla.

The results? My family smelled the aroma coming out of the kitchen; they couldn't resist and started trying the new invention. We ended up cooking a big portion for everybody.

This year, we are going to Mexico City again, and Tacos Reloaded is expected as one of the main dishes at the table.

Probably it is not the most innovative, original and creative recipe, but I bet you will think twice before using tortillas for a taco.

— Rodrigo Fernández



Tacos Reloaded

Ingredients:

Beef
Ham
Bacon
Green pepper
Onions
Soy sauce
Cheese

Preparation:

Cook all the ingredients, except the cheese, together. In a different pan toast any quesadilla cheese until it melts to the point that it is almost crusty but still able to fold like a tortilla. Once your mix is done, put everything on the cheese and it is ready to go. ¡Provecho!

★
**Chicken
Enchilada
Casserole**

Merry Christmas



This is only one of many favorite dishes all over New Mexico, the Land of Enchantment. Visit this state and you will enjoy the breathtaking sunsets and its fabulous local cuisine. Chiles have been grown in New Mexico for at least four centuries. You can now find New Mexico chiles canned and prepared in salsas. However, nothing compares to the delicious flavor of green chiles of late summer, or the rich red chiles of autumn. Enjoy!

— Ruth Harding

Servings: 4

Ingredients:

- 10 ounces mushroom soup
- 1/4 cup chopped green chiles
- 1/3 cup milk
- 1/2 cup chopped onion
- 1 1/2 cups shredded chicken
- Shortening
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 12 corn tortillas
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic salt

Preparation:

Combine the first 5 ingredients in a mixing bowl. Season with salt and garlic salt. Heat 1/2 inch of shortening in a heavy pan at medium-high heat. Quickly dip each tortilla into the shortening to soften. Drain on absorbent towels. Alternate ingredients in a greased, 2-quart casserole dish, beginning with a tortilla. Cover casserole dish and bake in a 350-degree oven for 25-30 minutes.

Serve with green salad and Mexican rice and beans on the side.

This is a quick dish that can be made when family gathers for any occasion. The Avocado Chicken Salad is wonderful on a summer family outing to the park. Especially in a sandwich. Or you can substitute turkey from your leftover holiday meals and enjoy the Avocado Turkey Salad with the family that refuses to leave your home! And always have tortilla chips available to enjoy with this dish.

— Shelley Martinez

Servings: 8 - 10

Ingredients:

Whole rotisserie chicken (or leftover turkey)
8 ounces sour cream
3-4 ripe avocados
Salt
Pepper
Chopped tomato for garnish
Tortilla chips

Preparation:

Debone and shred chicken (or turkey). Peel and mash avocados in a separate dish. Add mashed avocados to the chicken (or turkey) along with the sour cream. Mix all ingredients well. Add salt and pepper to taste and garnish with a chopped tomato. Enjoy as a sandwich or with tortilla chips on the side.

**Quick Avocado
Chicken Salad**





Channa Masala



Channa masala with spinach is a vegetarian variation of a traditional and popular North Indian food dish. Channa, Hindi for chickpea; masala simply translates to chickpeas with a spicy mixture. This dish can be served with the traditional Indian bread (naan) or with white rice.

Servings: 4

— Vivek Chittur

Ingredients:

- 1 teaspoon vegetable oil
- 1 small onion, minced
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1/2 teaspoon ground coriander
- 1/2 teaspoon turmeric
- 1 teaspoon cumin seeds
- 1 teaspoon curry powder/garam masala
- 1 teaspoon paprika
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 15-ounce can chickpeas
- 1 tomato, chopped
- 1/2 cup water
- 1 teaspoon fresh ginger
- 1/2 fresh green chile, minced

Preparation:

In a heavy pot with a lid, heat oil to medium and add onions and garlic. Cook, stirring regularly for 5 minutes or so. You want the garlic and onions to actually start to brown. Turn heat to medium low and add ground cumin, turmeric, cumin seeds, curry powder, coriander, paprika and salt. The spices should become fragrant when they hit the heat. Stir for 60 seconds, then add the tomato and cook for another 3 minutes, stirring regularly. Add chickpeas and water and stir to combine. Cover with a lid and cook for 10 minutes. It should be at a gentle simmer. Add chile and ginger, stir for another 30 seconds and serve.

SLEEP 'TIL
YOU'RE HUNGRY,
EAT 'TIL
YOU'RE SLEEPY.

Sides

Tomato Pie

Merry Christmas

Servings: 6

Ingredients:

5 tomatoes, peeled and sliced
12 fresh basil leaves, chopped
1/2 cup chopped green onion
1 (9-inch) prebaked deep dish pie shell – savory, not for desserts
4 slices cooked bacon
1 cup grated mozzarella
1 cup grated cheddar
1/4 cup grated Pecorino Romano
1 cup mayonnaise
Salt and pepper

Long before pies were known as a dessert dish (an addition that's more recent than you think), they were typically stuffed with meat and vegetables. This is a recipe I started making for special occasions about 8 years ago. It's a bit of work, but well worth it. It was based on a recipe my Memaw made; she used to top this with another layer of pastry, making it a more traditional pie. I added bacon, basil and the cheese/mayo topping, which browns up in the oven to form a nice crust.

— Brian Truax

Preparation:

You must first remove the skins from the tomatoes. It's important to use firm, but ripe tomatoes. Remove the core from the tomatoes, and then make a small X on the bottom with your knife. Next, bring a large pot of water to boil, and prepare an ice bath for your tomatoes. Add the tomatoes to the boiling water, no more than two or three at a time, and blanch them in the boiling water for 15-30 seconds. The skin should just begin to split around the edges. Remove the tomatoes from the boiling water, place them directly in your ice bath, and let them cool completely. Remove the tomatoes from the ice bath and use a paring knife to peel off the edges starting at the X. (If it doesn't release, plunge them back into the water and allow them to cool for 10-15 seconds.) Once the skins have been removed, slice your tomatoes no thicker than a quarter inch. Cook up your bacon in a frying pan and drain off the grease. Allow the bacon to crisp up, then crumble into little bacon bits. Combine the grated cheeses and mayonnaise together. Follow the instructions to prebake your deep dish pie shell.

Assembly

Preheat your oven to 350 degrees. Place the tomatoes in a colander in the sink in 1 layer. Sprinkle with salt and allow to drain for 10 minutes. Layer the tomato slices, basil, green onion and bacon bits in pie shell, alternating until you reach the rim of your pie shell. Season lightly with salt and pepper. Spread your cheese mixture on top of the tomatoes and bake for 30 minutes or until lightly browned. Cut into slices and serve warm.

I understand that at first glance these rolls don't sound appetizing; however, I assure you that they are. After a wild-haired, brilliant craving for a mixture of honey and garlic, I whipped up some rolls that will not disappoint and can be served as a sweetened staple side to any dish that is wanting.

— Chad Shanehchian

Servings: 9

Ingredients:

2 cups Bisquick mix

3 eggs

2/3 cup milk

2 tablespoons fresh garlic purée

with 1 tablespoon olive oil

2 tablespoons butter

4 ounces honey

Brush

Non-stick baking sheet

Two mixing bowls

Preparation:

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Crack open and mix eggs, milk and garlic purée in bowl. Slowly add the Bisquick mix to the bowl. Form biscuits on baking sheet. Bake biscuits for 20 minutes. Combine honey and butter in another bowl or saucepan with enough heat to melt them together. When biscuits are done, baste biscuits directly with honey butter mixture with brush. Wait a few minutes to let it set in and enjoy.

Honey Butter
Garlic Rolls



There are flavors and aromas that take you to a place in time instantly. This salad appears in our home only in the summers and every year we enjoy it immensely. Although it may sound like an odd combination of foods, this recipe is easy and delicious.

— Roxy Sibrian

Servings: 4

Ingredients:

- 1 mango – peeled, seeded and diced
- 1/2 (15-ounce) can black beans, rinsed and drained
- 1/2 (15-ounce) can navy beans, rinsed and drained
- 1/4 cup chopped onion
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh cilantro
- 1/4 cup balsamic vinaigrette salad dressing
- Cherry tomatoes (handful)

Preparation:

In a medium salad bowl, mix together the mango, black beans, navy beans, onion and cilantro. Toss with the balsamic vinaigrette dressing. Enjoy right away, or chill until serving. Garnish with cherry tomatoes.

Two Bean
Mango Salad





Mrs. Gribben's
Cornbread



The recipe is from my husband, Gregg, who got it from his mother, Aileen Young, who obtained it from her childhood piano teacher, Mrs. Gribben. Aileen still reminisces about the fragrant smell of the baking cornbread while she took her piano lessons at Mrs. Gribben's house. Mrs. Gribben inherited the recipe from her mother and grandmother, so we estimate the recipe is more than 160 years old.

— Sally Young

Servings: 4 to 8

Ingredients:

- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 2/3 cup yellow cornmeal
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 3 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 large egg, well-beaten
- 1 cup whole milk
- 1/3 cup melted butter (do not use margarine)

Preparation:

Preheat oven to 475 degrees. Sift the flour, cornmeal, sugar and baking powder 4 times. In a second bowl, beat egg until foamy. Add milk to egg and beat together. Pour sifted dry ingredients into egg/milk bowl ... all at one time. Gently fold dry ingredients into liquid until fully blended. Stir in the melted butter. **DO NOT OVER-STIR.** Pour batter into greased 9-inch cake pan. Bake 16 to 18 minutes (it's done when an inserted toothpick comes out clean). Let cool 8 to 10 minutes. Best if served still warm.

ALL
HAPPINESS
DEPENDS ON A
LEISURELY
BREAKFAST.

Breakfast



Bananas Foster Topped Overnight French Toast

Servings: 8

Ingredients:

- Cooking spray
- 10 ounces challah bread, sliced 1 inch thick (Hawaiian or brioche would work)
- 2 large eggs
- 1 cup egg substitute
- 1 1/2 cups fat free milk
- 1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/4 cup agave or white sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon Myers's rum or rum extract (optional)

Banana topping

- 1 tablespoon light butter
- 1/2 cup brown sugar (packed)
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 tablespoon Myers's rum or rum extract (optional)
- 4 medium ripe bananas, sliced

Dessert for breakfast? This make-ahead baked French toast casserole topped with Bananas Foster will wow your guests this holiday season! Put out some bowls of fresh berries and fruit and your guests won't even know this is a lightened-up French toast.

— Dustin Scherer

Preparation:

Spray a 13x9-inch baking dish with cooking spray. Arrange bread slices in one layer in baking dish, squeezing them slightly to fit.

In a large bowl whisk together eggs, egg substitute, milk, vanilla, 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon, agave or sugar, salt and rum until combined well and pour evenly over bread. Cover and refrigerate at least 8 hours or overnight for best results.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees and bring bread to room temperature. Bake uncovered in middle of oven until puffed and edges are pale golden, 40 to 45 minutes.

While it's baking, in a large deep sauté pan melt light butter over low heat. Add brown sugar, cinnamon, vanilla and rum and stir until sugar is dissolved. Add a few drops of water if needed and let sauce simmer about 2 minutes. Add sliced bananas and remove from heat. Keep covered until French toast comes out of the oven.

When French toast is cooked, divide among 8 plates and top with bananas. Enjoy!!

Chorizo and Potato Breakfast Casserole

The foolproof way to a delicious meal is a casserole dish; the same standard applies to breakfast meals as well. Serve this spicy, meaty breakfast any time, when you've got a big day ahead or when you need to recoup from a big night before.

— Jake Frick



Servings: 8

Ingredients:

- 1 pound uncooked chorizo
- 9 eggs
- 2 1/2 cups milk
- 1 tablespoon ground mustard
- 1 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1 (28 ounce) package frozen O'Brien potatoes (potatoes and bell peppers)
- 2 cups shredded Colby or Monterey Jack cheese
- 1 (1 pound) jar black bean and corn salsa

Preparation:

Coat a 13x9-inch baking dish with nonstick cooking spray. Cook the chorizo in a skillet over medium heat until no longer pink, breaking it up into small pieces as it cooks. Drain on paper towels. In a mixing bowl, beat the eggs into the milk. Season with dry mustard and cayenne pepper, and then add potatoes, cheese, salsa and chorizo. Pour into prepared baking dish. Cover the baking dish with plastic wrap or aluminum foil and refrigerate for 8 hours or overnight. Then, preheat oven to 350 degrees and remove from refrigerator to let stand for 30 minutes. Bake for 1 hour, until set completely.

Chilaquiles are basically corn tortilla pieces that are fried, cooked in salsa, and sprinkled with cheese, chicken and any other protein enhancement you can find. They are often served for breakfast with eggs and a side of beans or nopalitos. My mother grew up with her mother making them with green chile tomato salsa and grated Chihuahua cheese. It will help with the frying if your tortillas are a little dry. If they are fresh, cut them first, and put them in a warm oven for a few minutes first to dry them out a bit, then proceed.

— Leonardo Basterra

Preparation:

First, the salsa verde

Put 1 pound tomatillos, husks removed, into a saucepan; cover with water by an inch. Add 1 jalapeño, stems and seeds removed. Add 2 cloves garlic. Bring to a boil. Cook for 5 minutes until tomatillos have changed color and are cooked through. Put tomatillos, jalapeño and garlic in a blender. Add a cup of the cooking liquid. Blend until completely puréed. Add salt to taste.

Second, prepare the tortillas

In a large sauté pan, coat pan generously with corn oil (1/8 inch), heat on medium-high to high. When the oil is quite hot, add the tortillas; fry until golden brown. Remove tortillas to a paper towel lined plate to soak up excess oil. Sprinkle a little salt on the tortillas. Wipe pan clean of any browned bits of tortillas.

Third, mix together, top and garnish with all the goodies

Add 2 tablespoons oil to pan, bring to high heat again. Add the salsa and let salsa cook for several minutes. If you have a few sprigs of epazote, add them to the salsa. Then add the fried tortilla quarters to the salsa. Gently turn over the pieces of tortilla until they are all well coated with salsa. Let cook for a few minutes more. Remove from heat. Serve chilaquiles with garnishes and fried eggs and beans or nopalitos.

Chilaquiles.
Chee-lah-KEE-less!



Servings: 12

Ingredients:

1 dozen corn tortillas, preferably stale, or left out overnight to dry out a bit, quartered or cut into 6 wedges

Corn oil

Salt

1 1/2 to 2 cups salsa verde

1 pound tomatillos

1 jalapeño

2 cloves garlic

A few sprigs of epazote (optional)

Garnishes

Cotija cheese, queso fresco or Chihuahua cheese

Crema Mexicana (don't use sour cream; you will Tex-Mex them!)

Cilantro, chopped

Red onion, chopped

Avocado, sliced or roughly chopped



Servings: Depends on the number of people eating them. The beauty of this dish is that you can combine the ingredients as you like them most. You can also add shredded chicken if you have some on hand.

Ingredients:

- Yellow corn tortillas (about 15). Use the brand you like most.
- 1 white onion chopped into small pieces
- 1 quart vegetable oil (enough to deep fry the tortillas)
- 1 jar crema Mexicana
- 2 bottles of La Costeña Salsa Verde
- 2 cups shredded mozzarella cheese
- Salt



After a great night spent with family and friends, it's nice to get up and enjoy a nice plate of Chilaquiles with a side of rice and beans.

— Peter Wortman

Preparation:

Heat the oil in a deep pot until it reaches around 375 degrees.

Cut the tortillas into six wedges, and fry them in batches until golden brown and crispy. Make sure you salt them right after they come out of the oil. Place them on paper towels so they drain the excess oil. Allow them to cool.

Mix the salsa with the crema (to taste) and add the onion to it. In an oven-safe casserole dish, place a thin layer of salsa. Then, add some of the tortillas and sprinkle some cheese on them. Add some more salsa, more tortillas and more cheese. You should end up with about three or four layers. Sprinkle the remaining salsa and cheese on the top. Make sure that the salsa fills the casserole dish. The tortillas are going to absorb the liquid, and if you don't have enough they will be very dry.

Cover the casserole dish and place in a 375-degree oven for about 35 minutes or until it heats through. Serve with your favorite type of rice and beans.

Provecho.

LOOK FOR
SOMEONE TO EAT
AND DRINK WITH
BEFORE YOU LOOK
FOR SOMETHING
TO EAT AND DRINK.

Drinks



Lane Egnog

Oh sure, you've got your turkey and dressing and pumpkin pie, but nothing pleases Jeff's palate like some Lane Family eggnog made from scratch. Truth be told, it's not really a Lane recipe. It actually comes from Jeff's aunt's family. But since he can't remember how to spell their name, they'll have to wait for a future edition to get credit. Anyway, by the time young Jeffery was 11 or 12, his mom would allow the lad a cup of this grownup quaff. It was so wonderful, essentially a milkshake with whiskey, the boy simply couldn't resist stealing several more cups when the folks weren't looking. To this day, 30-plus years later, the tasty treat is one of Jeff's favorite things about the holiday season.

— Jeff Lane

Servings: About 60 cups

Ingredients:

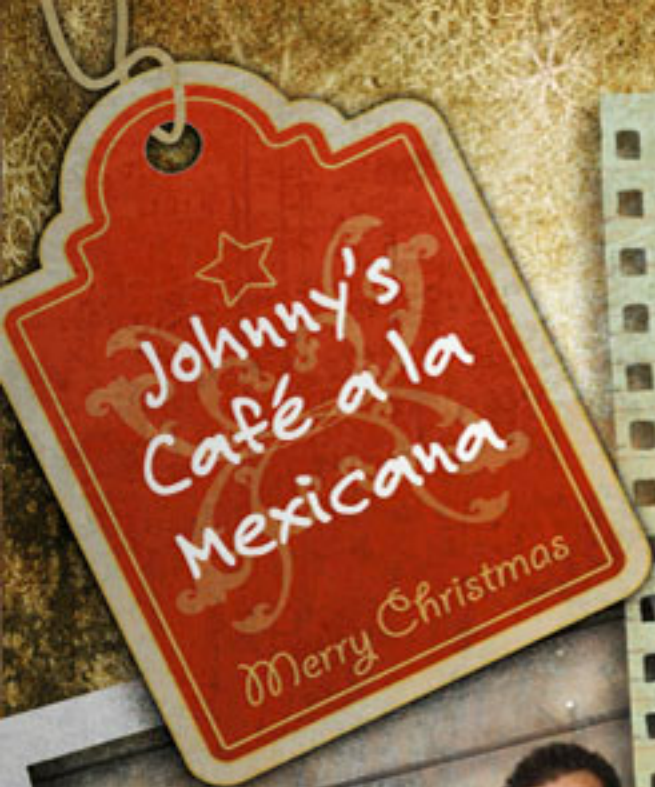
1 dozen eggs, separated
8 cups (1/2 gallon) milk
1 cup sugar
1 gallon ice cream (I use Blue Bell French Vanilla)
1 pint 100 proof whiskey
Nutmeg to taste

Preparation:

Beat egg yolks until light. Very slowly add 1/2 cup liquor. Wash and dry beaters. Beat egg whites as you beat for pie meringue, in large bowl. Add sugar slowly. Break ice cream in punch bowl. Stir in egg yolk mixture and some milk. With mixer on low, add in egg whites. Add remaining liquor and milk.

Note: Place the punch bowl in a larger bowl partially filled with ice to keep eggnog cold. When adding the liquor to egg yolks, it must be added slowly as it will cook the eggs if poured in all at one time.

If you do not want too much, you can reduce the ingredients by half in quantity. This will fill the regular-size punch bowls.



When I was young, my grandmother taught me about how love and food unite the family even more. During the holidays, especially when it's chilly outside, what better way to spend more time with the ones you love than to make Mexican coffee and enjoy it with some sweet bread, and reminisce about the good times we've shared.

— Johnny Salazar

Servings: 6

Ingredients:

2/3 cup any brand coffee

1/4 cup firmly packed brown sugar

3 cinnamon sticks (3-inch)

6 cups cold water

Preparation:

Place coffee in filter in brew basket of coffee maker. Place sugar and cinnamon sticks in empty pot of coffee maker.

Add water to coffee maker; brew. When brewing is complete, stir coffee mixture until well blended. Pour evenly into 6 coffee cups or mugs to serve.

Every Christmas my girlfriends and I get together for a "girls' night out" before the holiday season gets too crazy. We always kick off our celebration with this drink.

— Shelly Thomas

Ingredients:

Limeade

Tequila

Triple sec

Cranberries – fresh or frozen

Preparation:

Add 1 large can limeade to blender. Fill can 2/3 full with tequila and 1/4 full with triple sec. Add to blender with 2 small handfuls cranberries and blend well.



**Jorge Tovar's
Ponche Crema
(Eggnog)**

Servings: Makes 1 quart

Ingredients:

9 egg yolks
4 cans condensed milk
2 bottles white rum
2 teaspoons vanilla
Rinds of 3 limes, grated
1 1/2 cups sugar
1 1/2 cups water

During the holidays, Venezuelans drink a lot of Ponche Crema. It is their version of eggnog. But this is not your regular eggnog; it is eggnog with a KICK! This recipe is my late grandmother's husband's, who we always begged to make at least one bottle for us every year.

— Verónica Szabó

Preparation:

Before you begin, make sure you have at least 2 empty 1-quart glass bottles set aside with their seals (caps or corks). Do not use plastic. Start with the syrup. To do this, mix the sugar and water and stir over medium heat until it thickens by letting it boil. Please note that it will not reach the consistency of honey; it will not be as thick. And make sure it remains clear and doesn't burn. Set aside to cool as you prepare everything else.

Whisk the yolks well with the lime rinds until well blended. Add the condensed milk, one can at a time, and mix until well blended. Do not use an electric mixer, as this will ruin the mixture. Strain to remove all large pieces of lime rinds (it's ok if smaller ones remain). Once strained, add the syrup (which should be at room temperature by now).

Add as much rum as you like, tasting as you mix it in. But be careful. You can start your own party before everyone else arrives. It might taste strong at first, but as the days pass and the Ponche Crema ages, all the flavors will blend in beautifully. The more rum you add, the better the Ponche will be. Use a funnel and pour into the empty glass bottle(s). Refrigerate and serve cold or with ice.

And as Jorge used to say: "Lo embotellas, lo colocas en la nevera y pal' buche" – "You bottle it, you put it in the fridge, and down it."

FOOD FOR
THOUGHT IS
NO SUBSTITUTE
FOR THE REAL
THING.

Desserts



Cupcake Cones

Whenever I make these cupcakes people are amazed and wonder how I could possibly bake cupcakes inside a cone. It's really very easy and it's just like making regular cupcakes (no, the cones will not burn). Children's faces will light up and adults will think you are a genius! They look like real ice cream cones when you top them with cream cheese frosting, and did I mention they are delicious?!!

— Erika Ruiz

Servings: 14

Ingredients:

14 flat-bottom wafer ice-cream cones
1 cup all-purpose flour
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
1/4 teaspoon salt
3/4 cup plus 2 tablespoons milk
2 1/2 ounces unsweetened chocolate, chopped
1 stick unsalted butter
1 cup sugar
1 large egg, lightly beaten
1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract

Cream cheese frosting (for 14 cupcake cones)

1 1/4 (8 ounce) packages cream cheese, softened
1/4 cup and 2 teaspoons butter, softened
1 cup and 3 tablespoons sifted confectioners' sugar
1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract



Preparation:

Heat oven to 350 degrees. Stand cones on an ungreased baking sheet. In a mixing bowl, whisk together flour, baking soda, and salt; set dry ingredients aside.

Fill a medium saucepan with water and set over medium heat; bring water to a boil. Reduce heat, and let water simmer. In the metal bowl of an electric mixer, combine milk, 2 1/2 ounces chocolate, and 1 stick butter. Set bowl over simmering water, stirring occasionally, until butter and chocolate have melted. Remove bowl from heat; stir in 1 cup sugar.

Transfer bowl to mixer fitted with the paddle attachment. Add reserved dry ingredients, and beat until well combined. Add egg and 1 teaspoon vanilla; beat to combine. Pour batter into cones, filling each cone three-quarters full.

Transfer baking sheet to oven, and bake until domes form and a cake tester inserted into the center of a cupcake comes out clean, 20 to 25 minutes. Remove from oven, and transfer to a wire rack to cool completely.

For the frosting

Let cream cheese and butter sit out until softened. In a medium bowl, beat together the cream cheese and butter until creamy. Mix in the vanilla, then gradually stir in the confectioners' sugar. Use a spatula or a pastry bag to top your cupcakes. Store any remaining frosting in the refrigerator.



Green Stuff



My best friend baked this dessert for one of our Sunday night gatherings and it was incredible. We all loved the "green stuff" so much that there were no leftovers in sight!

— Brenda Carbajal

Servings: 9 - 12

Ingredients:

- 1 cup flour
- 1 stick margarine
- 1 cup chopped pecans
- 8 ounces cream cheese
- 1 cup powdered sugar
- 1 large container Cool Whip
- 2 packages (3 3/4 ounces) instant pistachio pudding
- 3 cups milk

Preparation:

Mix flour, margarine and pecans. Press into 9" x 13" pan and bake at 325 degrees for 25 minutes; then let cool. Mix cream cheese, powdered sugar and 1 cup Cool Whip; spread over crust mix. Mix instant pudding with indicated amount of milk in recipe (not amount given on pudding box). Spread Cool Whip over top. Let stand in refrigerator 15-20 minutes.

This was my favorite recipe growing up!! It was my favorite, because I was allowed in the kitchen. This cake doesn't require "cooking (read oven)" so it was considered safe for a 5-year-old. I've been repeating this recipe through the years and have become quite an expert on it. Now a mom of three, I made sure all my children had their "initiation" in the kitchen with cold cakes! We've had our share of Jello burns!

— Eugenia Archetti



Servings: 8 - 10

Ingredients:

- 3 or 4 packs of Chocolinas (if not available, any chocolate cookie w/o filling will do)
- 2 cups coffee with sugar (cold)
- 17.6 ounces dulce de leche (or caramel)
- 17.6 ounces cream cheese or mascarpone
- Oporto (or any other sweet wine)

Chocotorta 'al Dulce de Leche



Preparation:

Mix the dulce de leche and cream cheese together. Dip each chocolate cookie in coffee and lay down on a large plate or cake tray. After the first layer is laid out, sprinkle with sweet wine and cover with the dulce de leche/cream cheese mix. Repeat steps 2 and 3 until you have no more cookies. Decorate top of cake with a layer of dulce de leche alone or use your imagination for upper layer! My favorite is dulce de leche and chopped walnuts. Refrigerate at least 2 hours prior to serving.
Enjoy!

Buñuelos Mexicanos

Christmas has always been my family's favorite holiday season. It's not only Christmas Day, but a whole month full of warmth, music, aromas, moments and feelings that make this season so meaningful to me. One typical thing families back in Mexico would always have was a plate, basket or container with buñuelos. It is a staple dessert or snack you could find any given day in December. Buñuelos are typical in Mexico, but also common in other countries, like Colombia and Spain. However, the recipe I'm about to share is the Mexican style. Great to have any time of the day – as breakfast, dessert, or a quick snack while decorating the Christmas tree or wrapping gifts. Goes great with chocolate caliente. I hope you enjoy it!

— Jaime Belden

Servings: 16

Ingredients:

- 4 eggs
- 1/4 cup white sugar
- 1 teaspoon vegetable oil
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup white sugar
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 cup vegetable oil for frying

Preparation:

In a large bowl combine eggs with 1/4 cup sugar and beat until thick and lemon-colored. Add the oil. Combine separately 1 1/2 cups of the flour, the baking powder and the salt. Gradually add this to the egg mixture and beat well. Turn dough out onto a floured board (use remaining 1/2 cup flour) and knead thoroughly until dough is smooth. Shape dough into 16 balls. Roll each one into a circle about 5 inches in diameter. Let stand uncovered on waxed paper for about 10 minutes. Heat oil in a deep fry pan to 350 degrees. Fry circles until golden brown, turning once. Drain on paper towels. Sprinkle with sugar/cinnamon mixture. Store airtight.



Every Christmas my sister and I make a batch of what have come to be known as "Kiss Cookies" for our friends and neighbors. Our favorite person to deliver these special cookies to is our high school choir director who mentored both of us throughout high school and even still to this day plays a big role in our lives. We always make it a point to make his batch extra special.

— Jessica Hampson

Servings: 40 cookies

Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup butter, softened
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup packed brown sugar

1 egg

1 teaspoon almond extract

2 cups all-purpose flour

1 teaspoon baking soda

1/4 teaspoon salt

Additional sugar

40 milk chocolate kisses with almonds

Glaze

1 cup confectioners' sugar

1 tablespoon milk

4 teaspoons raspberry jam

1/4 teaspoon almond extract

Preparation:

In a bowl, cream butter and sugars. Beat in egg and extract. Combine the flour, baking soda and salt; gradually add to creamed mixture. Cover and chill for 1 hour or until easy to handle.

Roll into 1-inch balls, then roll in additional sugar. Place 2 inches apart on ungreased baking sheets. Bake at 325 degrees for 13-15 minutes or until golden brown. Immediately press a chocolate kiss into the center of each cookie. Cool on wire racks. Combine glaze ingredients; drizzle over cookies.





Capirotada

One of my grandmother's favorite dishes to make with old bread and milk was Capirotada which she would cook in a clay oven with firewood. You may not have a clay oven outside, but this recipe is all goodness and heart, and you can improvise as much as you like and make it your own.

— Joshua Patron



Ingredients:

- 1 pound of Mexican Bolillos
- 2 cups fresh cows' milk
- 1 can sweetened condensed milk
- 1 cup sugar
- 4 egg yolks
- 2 tablespoons vanilla
- 2 teaspoons cinnamon
- 4 sticks butter (softened/melting)
- 1/2 cup chopped walnuts
- 1/2 cup raisins

Preparation:

Cut bread into small cube pieces. Place in a large bowl. Add milks and allow to set for about 1 hour in refrigerator. In a separate container, combine softened/melted butter, sugar, egg yolks, vanilla, cinnamon, and the rest. Add butter and sugar mixture to milk-soaked breads. Grease a large baking pan with butter. Pour into pan until 1/2 full. Bake at 325 degrees for about 1 hour or until honey browned.

"Rum Balls" ... are not for children!
This was the saying of the season. As children, our favorite activity was to sneak as many Rum Balls as we could fit into our mouths. I could usually fit two or three but my brothers and cousins could fit four to five, so I never won. What I did win was memories that would last a lifetime. Enjoy these tasty treats as they are wrapped in the spirit of the season.

— Julie Jameson Grayum

Servings: Makes 90

Ingredients:

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 cup plus 1 tablespoon unsweetened Dutch-process cocoa powder
- 2 teaspoons coarse salt
- 8 ounces (2 sticks) unsalted butter, softened
- 1 1/3 cups sugar, plus more for rolling
- 2 ounces rum
- 2 large egg yolks
- 2 tablespoons heavy cream
- 2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract
- Chocolate and vanilla-bean ganache

Preparation:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Sift flour, cocoa powder, and salt into a small bowl. Cream butter, sugar and rum with a mixer until pale and fluffy. Reduce speed to medium, and add yolks, cream and vanilla. Scrape sides of bowl. Beat in flour mixture until just combined. Form balls using 2 teaspoons dough for each, and roll each in sugar. Place 1 inch apart on parchment-lined baking sheets. With the handle of a wooden spoon, press gently in the center of each to create an indentation. Bake, rotating sheets halfway through, until cookies are just set, about 10 minutes. (If indentations lose definition, press centers again.) Let cool slightly on baking sheets. Transfer cookies to wire racks, and let cool.

Spoon warm ganache into center of each cookie. Let stand until firm, about 15 minutes. Cookies will keep, covered, for up to 3 days.

Rum Balls



Lemon Cake



This is a great cake for the summertime. It's moist and light, and the lemon drizzle has a nice zing! My mom used to make it in a bundt pan; as a kid I thought it looked very fancy.

— Karen Kain

Servings: About 10-15, but really depends on how big you cut the slices!

Ingredients:

Cake

- 1 package lemon Jell-O
- 1 box Duncan Hines yellow cake mix
- 3/4 cup water
- 3/4 cup oil (Wesson corn oil, for example)
- 1 teaspoon lemon flavoring
- 4 eggs – add one at a time

Topping

- 1 cup powdered sugar
- 3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- Lemon zest (grated lemon rind)
- Dash salt

Preparation:

Cake

Follow the box directions for making the cake, but add the eggs one at a time, beating well after each egg. Bake 45-50 minutes at 350 degrees.

Topping

Whisk together all ingredients; drizzle on the top and sides of the cake while it's still hot.

Tasty Twists: Chocolate Covered Pretzels

Servings: 36 pretzels

Ingredients:

2 (12-ounce) packages of semi-sweet chocolate chips
4 tablespoons shortening
3 dozen large unbroken sourdough pretzels (many stores sell these in bulk)
Assorted toppings (suggestions: sprinkles, melted white chocolate, melted caramel chips, toffee, nuts, candy cane, mini M&Ms, your favorite candy bar, etc.)

These pretzels are so delicious and such a big hit that I have actually considered selling them. So shhhh ... let's keep the recipe between us.

Last December my friends and I wanted to make a little holiday treat to share with all our loved ones and co-workers. We have a tendency to get in a little over our heads and this case was no exception. We came home with over 20 bags of chocolate chips, industrial-sized containers of sourdough pretzels, and every topping under the moon. Yes, we made this recipe times 10. How long does that take, you ask? Until 4 o'clock in the morning. The second we tried one we knew it was all worth it. Experiment with your sweet tooth and add any topping you crave; extra points will be given for creativity.

— Marina Willis

Preparation:

Prepare all toppings, chop up nuts/candy bars into small pieces and put in bowls that are easy to access.

Prepare double boiler; if you do not have a double boiler you can substitute by filling a large pan up to 1/3 with water and placing a smaller pan or metal bowl inside – ensure water does not boil into smaller pan. Melt chocolate and shortening in double boiler over hot water (may have to melt portions at a time depending on size of boiler). Stir until smooth. Using tongs, dip pretzels into chocolate, coating both sides.

Place on wax paper lined tray. Immediately sprinkle generously with toppings (ensure you do this before the chocolate cools and hardens). Refrigerate 1 hour or until set.

Optional White Chocolate/Caramel Topping: Take a heavy-duty Ziploc bag and cut a small hole in the corner. Melt white chocolate or caramel chips in the microwave. Use a spatula to transfer the "melt" into Ziploc bag. Squeeze the "melt" out of the hole and drizzle onto pretzel.

If you have a sweet tooth, you're going to love these brownies!!! They're AMAZING!!!
— Melissa Gonzalez

Servings: 2 batches = 24 brownies

Ingredients:

- ½ cup pecans
- ½ pound bacon
- 8 ounces bittersweet chocolate, chopped
- 2 ounces unsweetened chocolate, chopped
- 1 stick plus 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- ½ cup light brown sugar
- 3 tablespoons bourbon
- 4 large eggs
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ¼ cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1 ½ cups all-purpose flour



Bacon-Bourbon Brownies with Pecans

Preparation:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Line a 9-inch-square baking pan with parchment paper, allowing 2 inches of overhang on 2 opposite sides. Spray the paper with vegetable spray. Spread the pecans in a pie plate and toast for about 8 minutes, until fragrant. Let cool, and then coarsely chop the nuts.

In a skillet, cook the bacon over moderate heat, turning once, until crisp. Drain on paper towels and let cool; reserve 3 tablespoons of the fat. Finely chop the bacon.

In a saucepan, combine both chocolates with the butter and stir over very low heat until melted; scrape into a large bowl. Using a handheld electric mixer beat in both sugars with the reserved 3 tablespoons of bacon fat. Beat in the bourbon. Add the eggs and salt and beat until smooth. Sift the cocoa and flour into the bowl; combine until blended.

Scrape the batter into the prepared pan and sprinkle the bacon and pecans on top. Bake for about 50 minutes, until the brownies are set around the edges but slightly wobbly in the center; a toothpick inserted into the center should have some batter clinging to it.

Transfer the pan to a rack and let the brownies cool completely. Lift the brownies out of the pan using the parchment paper. Cut into squares or rectangles.

Moist Carrot Cake with Nuts



Servings: 15

Ingredients:

- 2 cups flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup canola oil
- 1 3/4 cups sugar
- 4 eggs
- 1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 2 cups shredded carrots
- 8.8 ounces canned pineapple (optional)
- 1 cup pecans, chopped

For the icing

- 1 large package cream cheese
- 4 tablespoons butter
- 3 cups white sugar

One of my Mom's top recipes for dessert and my brother's favorite. This dish reminds me of Christmastime with my family because ever since I can remember my Mom would bake fruitcake for dessert (which my brother and I don't like) and this delicious carrot cake. Every Christmas dinner the fruitcake would be left over, but the carrot cake would be gone within the hour. Enjoy!

— Michelle Duffy

Preparation:

Preheat oven at 180 degrees. Grease and flour a round cake pan. In a bowl, sift the flour, baking powder, cinnamon and salt. Set aside.

With a mixer, mix the oil and the sugar. Add the eggs, one by one, until they are mixed well. Then add the vanilla. Add to this the flour mixture you had set aside and continue to mix. Finally, add the shredded carrots, the pecans and the pineapple. Put the batter into the pan and bake for approximately 1 hour.

To make the icing

Mix the cream cheese with the butter and begin adding the white sugar (sifted) little by little until you get the icing texture.



This is the perfect dessert for holidays. Though in Spain we normally cook and eat this delicious dessert on Easter, my grandmother and my mother used to cook it for us on Christmas day. Now that they are not with us anymore, my sisters and I like to follow the tradition so it's as though they were still here too.

— Patricia Sugg

Preparation:

Cut a large loaf of bread for torrijas in fairly thick slices (you can also use special ready-sliced bread). Mix the milk and sugar in a deep bowl. Beat the eggs in a separate dish. Dip the slices of bread in the sugared milk and eggs and deep fry in a pan with oil until golden brown. Then drain well.

Place the torrijas on a serving dish and pour honey over them. It is also traditional to add the sugared milk to the serving dish so that the torrijas soak it up and become more spongy.

Torrijas

Servings: 4

Ingredients:

32 fluid ounces milk

Olive oil

16 ounces honey

16 ounces sugar

8 eggs

Slices of bread for torrijas



Growing up, around the start of "autumn" in Houston, Texas, even though it's still blazing "caliente," my mom would prepare one of my all-time favorite cold-weather treats – her rendition of arroz con leche. Still to this day, I ask her for a vat of it to eat during my visits and to doggie-bag home. Great for those "cold-winter" months of Houston in the low 90s, or where winter truly visits everywhere else in the world. If there's a food that sparks memories and tastebuds, this one surely makes the list. Buen provecho, ya'll!

Un abrazo,
The Alvarez Family



Servings: 6 – 8

Ingredients:

3 cups water
1 cup rice
1 1/2 cups milk
1-2 cans condensed milk
1 cinnamon stick
Raisins (to taste)
Powdered cinnamon



Preparation:

Boil water in medium-sized pot and drop in the cinnamon stick. Once boiled, add 1 cup rice to water. Lower heat to simmer and cover. Cook rice until water is absorbed, approximately 10-15 minutes. Uncover, add 1 1/2 cups milk, then raisins if preferred. Cover and simmer again for 5-8 minutes or until rice is cooked to your liking. Once rice is cooked to your liking, add condensed milk. Remove cinnamon stick. Top off servings with powdered cinnamon to taste.

Serve hot – tastes even better this way in my opinion, but can also be served cold.

Brazilian
Chocolate
Pudding
(Brigadeirão)

Merry Christmas

This is an easy and quick recipe for this
delicious Brazilian chocolate pudding,
known as Brigadeirão in Brazil.

— Raquel Bueno

Servings: 2

Ingredients:

- 1 can condensed milk
- 1 can heavy whipping cream (after you
pour the condensed milk you can
measure the cream inside of the same
can – to know the quantity)
- 3 eggs
- 1 cup chocolate powder
- 1 tablespoon butter
- Granulated chocolate

Preparation:

In a blender, mix all ingredients until texture is
smooth. In a round baking pot (silicon or glass pot,
with a hole in the middle – must be microwave proof)
spray Pam or use butter. Sprinkle sugar and pour the
mix inside of the pot. Cover in microwave proof plastic
wrap, and put in microwave on high for about 12
minutes.

Allow to cool down. Sprinkle with granulated
chocolate on top and it's ready to be eaten! Enjoy.



Quick and Chewy Cake Mix Cookies

Servings: 24-30

Ingredients:

1 box cake mix (any brand)
2 eggs
1/2 cup oil



My family always made fun of me when I was younger because of my lack of cooking skills, and my brother always told everyone I used to burn water. So when I learned about these quick, easy and delicious cookies and took them to my niece's birthday party ... everyone was impressed and they were even chosen over her princess cake by the kids! Try this recipe out when you don't have time to make anything else or if you too want to impress your friends!

— Sandra Garcia

Preparation:

Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Mix all the ingredients with a wooden spoon. Place spoonful balls of cake mix cookie dough on a non-stick cookie baking sheet. Make sure the cookies are about 2 inches apart so they don't spread together. Place in the oven for about 10 minutes. When ready let stand for about 5 minutes to cool. Serve and enjoy!

The Best Ever Chocolate Sheet Cake

Chocolate anything is a big hit in my house! This cake makes enough to please the family and take some to share with coworkers. The toasted nuts add a nice touch and scream that plenty of TLC was used in this recipe.

— Shelly Dominguez Lieder

Servings: 20 small square servings

Ingredients:

- 1 package (8 squares) semisweet chocolate, divided
- 1 package (2-layer size) chocolate cake mix
- 1 package (3.9 ounces) Jell-O chocolate instant pudding mix
- 4 eggs
- 1 cup Breakstone's or Knudsen sour cream
- 1/2 cup oil
- 1/2 cup water
- 1 tub (8 ounces) Cool Whip (do not thaw)
- 3/4 cup chopped Planters pecans, toasted

Preparation:

Heat oven to 375 degrees. Melt two chocolate squares as directed on package. Beat cake mix, dry pudding mix and next four ingredients with mixer until well blended. Add melted chocolate; mix well. Pour into 15x10x1-inch pan sprayed with cooking spray. Bake 20 to 22 minutes or until toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. Cool 10 minutes.

Meanwhile, microwave remaining chocolate squares and Cool Whip in microwavable bowl. Microwave on high 1 1/2 minutes or until chocolate is completely melted and mixture is well blended, stirring after 1 minute. Cool 15 minutes; spread onto cake. Sprinkle with toasted nuts. Store in refrigerator.

How to roast nuts

Toasting nuts adds crunch and intensifies their flavor. To toast nuts in the oven, spread nuts in single layer in shallow baking pan. Bake at 350 degrees for 8 to 10 minutes or until golden brown, stirring occasionally. To toast nuts on the stovetop, place nuts in ungreased skillet. Cook on medium heat until golden brown, stirring frequently. To toast nuts in the microwave, place up to 1 cup of nuts in a microwavable shallow dish. Microwave on high until fragrant and crisp, stirring every 30 seconds.





This recipe is great for your little helpers at home because it's easy and delicious. It's also perfect for Thanksgiving, and it's a great dessert kids can help make and feel like they've contributed to the feast.

— Verónica Szabó

Ingredients:

- 1 1/2 cup pecans
- 1 cup semisweet chocolate chips, milk chocolate chips or white chocolate chips
- 1 unbaked 9-inch pie shell
- 4 eggs, beaten
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup light brown sugar
- 1/2 cup corn syrup
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- Pinch salt
- Confectioners' sugar, for garnish

Preparation:

Before you begin, measure everything out and set on the table so the kids have everything ready to mix.

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Spread the pecans and chocolate chips evenly on the bottom of the pie shell and set aside. Whisk all the other ingredients together in a medium bowl. Pour the mixture over the pecans and chocolate chips. Bake until firm (about 1 hour). Let it cool for about half an hour before slicing and serving. Sprinkle with confectioners' sugar.



Chocolate Layer Pie

Merry
Christmas

This recipe is a family favorite. I make this for family and friends' barbecues or when someone requests it. This dessert is definitely a crowd pleaser.

— Vonda Venison



Servings: 10

Ingredients:

Crust

- 1 cup flour (all-purpose)
- 1/2 cup margarine, melted
- 1 cup pecans, firmly chopped

Filling

- 1 cup Cool Whip
- 1 cup powdered sugar
- 1 package (8-ounce size) cream cheese
- 1 3-ounce package chocolate instant pudding
- 1 3-ounce package vanilla instant pudding
- 3 cups milk
- 12 ounces Cool Whip
- 1 Hershey's bar, frozen, grated

Preparation:

Crust

Mix the margarine, flour and pecans well. Spread crust in 9 1/2 x 13 1/2 inch baking dish. Bake at 350 degrees for 20 minutes. Let cool.

Filling

Mix Cool Whip, sugar and cream cheese. Spread over cooled crust. Mix each pudding with milk (make according to pie directions). Let sit a few minutes to thicken. Pour over cream cheese layer and top with Cool Whip. Sprinkle with Hershey's bar.

Yvette's Capirotada

Servings: 12

Ingredients:

- 4 bolillo breads (sliced)
- 3 tortillas (corn)
- 2 piloncillo blocks
- 1 cup shelled peanuts
- 1 cup raisins
- 1 cup cubed Cotija cheese
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 1 tablespoon small multicolored candy (grageas)
- 1 tablespoon cooking oil
- 2 sliced bananas
- 2 cups water



Capirotada is a popular dish eaten during Lent in Mexico. But in our family we like to prepare it even when it is not Lent. Capirotada makes us feel warm and loved because it brings memories of my grandmother who passed away a few years ago. "Pita," as my daughters call her, made capirotada often. She would make it at Lent, wintertime and on random weekends. Pita knew that if she called us and mentioned she made capirotada we would more than likely be at her house in a matter of minutes. Not only did we enjoy her capirotada but we also enjoyed her stories.

— Yvette Leon

Preparation:

In a deep pan, bring to a boil or until it becomes a bit thick 2 cups water, cinnamon stick and piloncillo. In a separate frying pan lightly fry the bolillo slices with tablespoon cooking oil. In a round 1.5-quart dish, place the 3 tortillas flat on the bottom. Now add the first layer of lightly fried bolillo. Add a few raisins, peanuts, banana slices and cubed cheese as second layer. Add another layer of bolillo bread and once again the raisins, peanuts, banana and cubed cheese layer. Now coat with the thick piloncillo and cinnamon mixture. Top with grageas.

Put in oven and bake for about 30 minutes at about 375 degrees. Serve warm.

