

2009 Gourmet Group Party Recipes

Peruvian Pisco Sour

Ingredients:

1 cup lime juice
2 cups Pisco
3 cups sugar
5 cups ice
ground cinnamon

Preparation:

Put lime juice, Pisco, sugar and ice in blender
Blend for exactly three minutes

Serve in small wine tasting glasses and top lightly with cinnamon. One blender serves at least 6-8 glasses.

Note: Traditional pisco sours include egg whites to add frothiness, but this is not included in this recipe. It is also preferable that the lime juice be freshly squeezed.

Jalapeno Corn Dip

Ingredients:

2 cans Mexicorn, drained
2 cups (8 oz) shredded cheddar cheese
5 jalapeno chiles, seeded and chopped
1 can chopped green chiles
½ cup sour cream
¼ cup mayonnaise
3 green onions, chopped

Preparation:

Combine the corn, cheese, jalapeno chiles, green chiles, sour cream, mayonnaise and green onions in a bowl and mix well.

Chill, covered, until serving time.

Serve with tortilla chips.

You may substitute fresh corn kernels from 4 ears of corn for the canned corn or add black beans to the dip for variety.

Tortilla Pinwheels

50 pinwheels

Filling:

* 8 oz. sour cream

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* 8 oz. cream cheese
1, 4 oz. can diced green chilies (well drained)
1, 4 oz. can chopped black olives
* 1 cup grated cheddar cheese
½ cup chopped green onions
Garlic powder and seasoned salt to taste

5, 10-inch flour tortillas

Mix filling. Spread evenly over tortillas. Roll tortillas and cover tightly with saran wrap. Refrigerate several hours to overnight.

Garnish with parsley. Serve with salsa.

- I use the low-fat version of these ingredients.

Arroz Verde al Poblano (Green Poblano Rice)

Ingredients:

1 2/3 cups chicken broth or water
2 fresh poblano chiles, stems and seeds removed, and roughly chopped
12 sprigs cilantro, plus extra for garnish
Salt, about 1/2 teaspoon if using salted broth, 1 teaspoon if using unsalted or water
1 tablespoon vegetable or olive oil
1 cup rice, preferably medium grain
1 small white onion, cut into 1/4-inch dice
5 garlic cloves, peeled and finely chopped

Preparation:

The flavoring: In a 2-quart saucepan, combine the broth and chiles, bring to a boil, then partially cover and simmer gently over medium to medium-low heat for about 10 minutes, until the chiles are very soft. Pour the chile mixture into a food processor, add the cilantro (stems and all), and process to a smooth puree. Press through a medium-mesh strainer into a bowl and stir in the salt.

The rice: Wipe the pan clean, add the oil and heat over medium. Add the rice and onion, and cook, stirring regularly, until the rice is chalky looking and the onion is soft, about 5 minutes. Stir in the garlic and cook a minute longer.

Add the warm (or reheated) chile liquid to the hot rice pan, stir once, scrape down any rice kernels clinging to the side of the pan, cover, and cook over medium-low heat for 15 minutes. Uncover and check a grain of rice: It should be nearly cooked through. If the rice is just about ready, turn off the heat, re-cover and let stand for 5 to 10 minutes longer to complete the cooking. If the rice seems far from done, continue cooking for 5 minutes or so, retest, then turn off the heat and let stand a few minutes longer. Fluff with a fork, scoop into a warm serving dish, decorate with cilantro sprigs and it's ready to serve.

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Advance preparation: The rice can be made several days ahead; turn out the fluffed rice onto a baking sheet to cool, transfer to a storage container, then cover and refrigerate. Reheat the rice in a steamer basket set over boiling water.

Fried Plantains

Ingredients:

20 firm-ripe plantains* (available at Hispanic markets and some specialty produce markets; try El Rey or call ahead to Whole Foods/Sendiks)

Vegetable oil for deep-frying

Preparation:

With a small sharp knife cut ends from each plantain and halve crosswise. Cut a lengthwise slit through skin along inside curve. Beginning in center of slit pry skin from plantain and with rippled blade of a mandoline or decorating knife cut flesh crosswise into 1/8-inch-thick slices.

In a deep fryer or large deep skillet heat 1 1/2 inches oil to 375°F. on a deep-fat thermometer and fry 12 to 15 plantain slices at a time, turning them, 2 to 3 minutes, or until golden, transferring as fried with a skimmer or slotted spoon to paper towels to drain. Season plantain slices with salt. (Plantain slices should be slightly crisp on outside but soft on inside.)

Plantain slices are best served immediately but may be made 1 day ahead, cooled completely, and kept in an air-tight container. Reheat plantain slices on a rack in a shallow baking pan in a preheated 350°F oven 5 minutes, or until heated through.

Sopa de Tortilla (Tortilla Soup)

Ingredients:

6 dried guajillo chiles, stemmed

2 dried pasilla chiles, stemmed

12 5- to 6-inch-diameter white corn tortillas

2/3 cup plus 2 tablespoons corn oil

2 cups coarsely chopped plum tomatoes

1 1/2 cups water

1/4 small white onion

2 large garlic cloves

1 large sprig fresh [epazote](#) or 2 large fresh cilantro sprigs

Pinch of baking soda

4 cups low-salt chicken broth

1/2 cup crumbled queso fresco

1 small avocado, peeled, pitted, diced

1/4 cup crema mexicana* or sour cream

Preparation:

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Cut slit in 1 long side of each chile; pull open. Remove seeds and membranes; press chiles flat. Cut pasilla chiles into 1x1/4-inch strips.

Cut 6 tortillas into 1x1/4-inch strips. Heat 2/3 cup oil in heavy medium skillet over medium-high heat until very hot. Working in batches, add tortilla strips to skillet; toss until crisp and golden, about 1 minute. Using slotted spoon, transfer strips to paper towels. One at a time, fry 6 whole tortillas in oil until golden and almost crisp, about 30 seconds per side. Transfer to paper towels. Working in batches, add guajillo chiles to skillet; press with spatula until chiles begin to blister, about 10 seconds per side. Transfer to paper towels. Add pasilla chile strips to skillet; stir 10 seconds. Transfer to paper towels to drain.

Combine tomatoes and next 5 ingredients in heavy large pot. Coarsely crumble whole tortillas, then guajillo chiles into pot. Bring to boil. Reduce heat to medium; cover and simmer until water is almost absorbed and chiles are soft, stirring occasionally, about 6 minutes. Working in 3 batches, puree mixture in blender until smooth, adding 1/4 cup broth to each batch. Heat 2 tablespoons oil in large saucepan over medium-high heat. Add tomato mixture; stir until thick and deeper in color, about 2 minutes. Add 3 1/4 cups broth; bring to boil. Simmer 8 minutes to develop flavors. Season with salt.

Ladle soup into bowls. Garnish each serving with tortilla strips, chile strips, cheese, diced avocado, and crema.

*Cultured Mexican cream with a slightly nutty flavor and consistency of thin sour cream.

Roasted Chayote & Red Pepper Lettuce Salad w/Tangerine Dressing

Ingredients for dressing:

2 scallions, chopped
1 fresh serrano chile, seeded and finely chopped
5 tablespoons fresh tangerine juice
2 teaspoons olive oil
1 teaspoon Sherry vinegar
2 medium chayotes (1 pound total), peeled, halved lengthwise, and seeded
2 medium red bell peppers (3/4 pound), quartered
2 heads Bibb lettuce, torn into small pieces

Preheat oven to 450°F.

Preparation for dressing:

Whisk together scallions, chile, juice, oil, and vinegar in a large bowl and season with salt and pepper.

Preparation for salad:

Cut chayote halves lengthwise into 1/4-inch-thick slices and arrange in 1 layer in two thirds of a lightly oiled shallow baking pan. Put bell pepper quarters, skin sides up, in other third of pan. Roast in middle of oven, uncovered, until chayote is browned in spots and bell pepper skins are blistered, about 30 minutes. Immediately add chayote to dressing and toss to coat.

Transfer hot bell peppers to a small bowl. Cover and let stand 10 minutes, then peel. Cut bell peppers into 1/4-inch-thick strips and add to chayote with any pepper juices accumulated in bowl. *

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Add lettuce and toss to coat.

** Chayote and bell peppers can be roasted and dressed 1 hour ahead and kept at room temperature. Add lettuce just before serving.*

Chipotle Sweet Potatoes

Ingredients:

3 large sweet potatoes (about 2 1/2 lbs.), peeled and cut into 1/2 in cubes.
1 cup balsamic vinaigrette, divided
1/4 tsp salt
1/2 tsp pepper
1/3 cup minced fresh cilantro
3 Tbsp. honey
2 chipotle peppers in adobo sauce, minced (La Preferida or other brand can be found at Pick and Save/Sendiks)

Preparation:

Drizzle sweet potatoes with 1/2 cup vinaigrette and sprinkle with salt and pepper; toss to coat. Place sweet potatoes in two greased 15 - in x 10 in x 1 in baking pans. Bake at 400F for 25-30 minutes or until tender, stirring once. Cool slightly; transfer to a large bowl.

In a small bowl, whisk the remaining vinaigrette with the cilantro, honey, and chipotle peppers. Pour over potatoes and gently stir to coat.

Pipian Verde con Pollo (Chicken in Green Pumpkin Seed sauce)

Ingredients:

Chicken:

5 cups water
6 chicken thighs with skin and bones
1/4 large white onion
3 garlic cloves, halved
3 large fresh cilantro sprigs
1 teaspoon fine sea salt

Sauce:

1 2/3 cups shelled pepitas (pumpkin seeds)
6 whole black peppercorns
12 ounces tomatillos, husked, rinsed, coarsely chopped
1/4 cup chopped white onion
1/4 cup chopped fresh cilantro
3 medium serrano chiles, chopped with seeds
2 garlic cloves, chopped
1 teaspoon fine sea salt
6 tablespoons corn oil

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Preparation for chicken:

Bring all ingredients to boil in large pot. Reduce heat; simmer uncovered until chicken is cooked through, about 30 minutes. Transfer chicken to bowl; cover to keep warm. Reserve chicken broth in pot; spoon off fat from surface.

Preparation for sauce:

Meanwhile, heat heavy large skillet over medium-low heat. Add pepitas; stir frequently until seeds puff and begin to pop, about 15 minutes (do not brown). Transfer to dish; cool. Set aside 2 tablespoons pepitas for garnish. Working in batches, finely grind remaining pepitas with peppercorns in spice mill or coffee grinder.

Puree tomatillos, next 5 ingredients, and 1/2 cup reserved chicken broth in blender until almost smooth. Heat 2 tablespoons oil in heavy medium skillet over medium-high heat. Add tomatillo mixture and simmer until sauce is thick and reduced to 1 cup, stirring frequently, about 5 minutes.

Heat remaining 4 tablespoons oil in heavy large pot over medium heat. Add ground pepita mixture. Stir constantly until mixture resembles very coarse paste and begins to color in spots, about 9 minutes. Add tomatillo mixture; stir 1 minute. Add 2 cups reserved chicken broth and bring to boil. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer until sauce is thick, stirring constantly, about 3 minutes longer. Season sauce to taste with salt. Spoon some sauce onto platter. Top with chicken. Spoon remaining sauce over. Garnish with reserved 2 tablespoons pepitas.

Peruvian Lomo Saltado (stir fry with beef strips)

Ingredients:

Beef:

2 1/4 lbs beef tenderloin, sliced into thin strips
3 red onions, peeled and cut in eight pieces
2 1/4 lbs all purpose potatoes, peeled, cut for French fries (may substitute pre-made frozen fries)
4 fresh peruvian yellow chili (Yellow, green or orange-colored fresh hot pepper or chili. This is the most common aji used in Peru.)
4 tomatoes, cut in eighths
2 tablespoons chopped parsley
1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
2 tablespoons soy sauce
1 1/4 cups oil
1/2 teaspoon key lime juice
pepper

Rice:

1/4 cup oil
1 tablespoon chopped garlic
2 cups white long grain rice
4 cups of water

Preparation:

Beef:

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Heat ½ cup oil in a large skillet over high heat. Add beef and quickly sauté until beef is seared and browned on all sides. Remove pan from heat and transfer beef to a plate. Save covered.

Return pan to medium-high heat and add 1 ½ tablespoons oil. Add onions and sauté until edges are seared and they begin to soften, about 2 minutes.

Add aji amarillo, tomatoes, parsley, salt, pepper, soy sauce and vinegar. Sauté until tomatoes have softened, about 2 minutes.

Add beef and toss gently.

Heat ¾ cups oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium heat. Add potatoes and sauté until browned and tender, about 15 minutes. Drain on paper towel (or simply bake frozen store-bought fries)

Rice:

In a medium/large pan, put 1/4 cup of oil and heat it until medium-high.

Add 1 tbsp. of chopped garlic and let it fry until brown. This just takes a few seconds.

Add 2 cups of white rice. Stir with a wooden spoon and mix with the garlic.

Add 4 cups of water.

Let the rice mixture boil (if necessary, turn up heat) for a few seconds.

Cover and simmer gently without lifting the lid until all of the water is absorbed and rice appears fluffy.

Turn off the heat, uncover and fluff the rice with a fork. The grains should be plump and soft, and not pasty.

Unmold rice in center of serving dish. Place beef and french fries on each side.

Sprinkle with finely chopped parsley.

Zucchini & Cheese Enchiladas

Ingredients:

8 corn tortillas

Olive oil

2 med. zucchini, sliced

1/4 c. onion, chopped

1 sm. can green chili

1 can whole pitted black olives

1/2 to 3/4 lb. Monterey Jack cheese

Enchilada sauce (recipe follows for homemade sauce)

Preparation:

Saute zucchini and onions in olive oil. Pour some sauce in the bottom of an oven proof 8 x 11 x 2 inch dish. Heat the tortillas one at a time for approximately 30 seconds in the microwave long enough to soften so they roll without breaking. Too hot or too long, then they get too stiff). Dip warmed tortillas into sauce. Fill with small amounts of zucchini mixture, cheese, olives and chili. Roll the enchilada and place in dish. When you have filled the dish with 8 enchiladas, top the dish with the remaining cheese, olives and chili. Pour the remaining enchilada sauce over the entire dish. Bake 15 to 20 minutes at 350 degrees.

Homemade Enchilada Sauce:

1/2 c. onion, chopped

1 clove garlic, minced

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1 tbsp. olive oil
1/2 c. vegetable or chicken stock
1 c. tomato puree
2 tsp. chili powder add more if desired to suit taste
1 tsp. cumin
Salt and pepper, to taste
Saute onion and garlic in oil. Add the remaining ingredients, bring to a boil and simmer for about 1/2 hour. (1 can tomato paste can be substituted for the tomato puree. Add water until you reach the consistency that you like).

Argentine Lentil Bean Stew

Ingredients:

1 cup dry lentils
1 quart water
1 cube vegetable bouillon
3 medium tomatoes, peeled and diced
1 large onion, diced
1 carrot, sliced
1 medium apple - peeled, cored and diced
1/2 cup frozen peas
1 large clove garlic
1 tablespoon olive oil
1/4 cup barbeque sauce
1/2 teaspoon paprika
salt and pepper to taste

Directions:

Place the lentils and water in a large pot, and mix in the vegetable bouillon. Bring to a boil, reduce heat to low, and simmer 20 minutes.

Stir the tomatoes, onion, carrot, apple, peas, garlic, olive oil, barbeque sauce, and paprika into the pot. Continue to simmer 20 minutes. Season with salt and pepper to serve.

Brazilian Cashew Cookies

Ingredients:

3/4 cup raw cashews (3 1/2 ounces)
1/2 cup all-purpose flour
1/3 cup cornstarch
3/4 stick (6 tablespoons) unsalted butter, softened
1/4 cup sugar
1/8 teaspoon salt
* special equipment: parchment paper

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Preparation:

Put oven rack in middle position and preheat oven to 375°F.

Pulse 1/2 cup nuts in a food processor until finely chopped, being careful not to process to a paste, then transfer to a large shallow baking pan. Toast nuts, stirring every 2 minutes to prevent edges from burning, until pale golden, 6 to 8 minutes. Cool completely in pan.

Whisk together flour and cornstarch in a bowl.

Beat together butter and sugar in a large bowl with an electric mixer at medium-high speed until pale and fluffy, about 3 minutes in a stand mixer or 5 with a handheld. Add toasted ground nuts and salt and beat until combined. Reduce speed to low, then add flour mixture and mix just until a dough forms.

Form dough into a rectangular block and roll out between 2 (12-inch-long) sheets of parchment with a rolling pin into a 10- by 8-inch rectangle.

Chill dough in parchment on a baking sheet until firm, about 10 minutes.

Meanwhile, coarsely chop remaining 1/4 cup nuts.

Discard top sheet of parchment and sprinkle dough with coarsely chopped nuts. Bake until golden, 14 to 16 minutes. Transfer shortbread to a rack and cool completely, then break into rough shapes with your hands.

Mexican Chocolate Cake

Ingredients for cake:

1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
1 cup sugar
1/2 cup unsweetened cocoa
2 teaspoons cinnamon
1 teaspoon baking soda
1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper or ground Mexican chili powder
1/4 teaspoon salt
1 cup cold water
1/4 cup canola oil
1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
1 tablespoon vanilla extract

Ingredients for chocolate glaze:

1 cup confectioners' sugar
1/2 cup cocoa
6 tablespoons water
10 small fresh strawberries

Preparation:

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Heat oven to 350° F. Lightly coat an 8-inch round cake pan with vegetable cooking spray.

Combine all the cake ingredients in a mixing bowl and stir until smooth.

Pour into the pan and bake 25 to 30 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean.

Cool in the pan on a wire rack for 10 minutes.

Remove from pan and cool completely.

When the cake has cooled, whisk together the first three glaze ingredients. Dip each strawberry into the glaze and set aside.

Pour the remaining glaze over the cake and arrange the strawberries on top. Set aside to dry, about 30 minutes.

Almond Flan

Ingredients:

3/4 cup sugar
2/3 cup blanched, slivered almonds
1 1/2 (14-ounce) cans Eagle Brand sweetened condensed milk
1 cup whole milk
3 whole eggs
3 egg yolks
1 teaspoon Mexican vanilla extract*

Preparation:

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Place oven rack in middle position. Put sugar in a round 9-by-3-inch cake pan. Using a heavy oven mitt or tongs, place the pan directly over medium heat to caramelize the sugar. Heat until the sugar liquefies, about 3 to 5 minutes, stirring occasionally with a wooden spoon. *Do not touch the melted sugar* — it will cause serious burns. When the hot liquid in the pan is a golden brown color, remove from heat and set aside on a rack to cool and harden.

In a blender, combine the almonds, condensed milk, whole milk, eggs, yolks, and vanilla. Process on medium speed until well blended. Pour custard mixture over the prepared caramel. Place the cake pan in a larger, deeper pan and pour about an inch of hot water around the cake pan to make a water bath. Cover the flan loosely with a foil tent and place the larger pan on the middle rack of the preheated oven. Bake for 1 hour and 15 minutes, or until flan is set in the center (it will no longer jiggle). Remove from the oven and cool on a rack at room temperature. Refrigerate until thoroughly chilled, at least 1 hour.

To serve, run a knife or thin spatula around the edge of the flan to release it from the sides of the pan. Place a 10-inch (or larger) serving platter on top of the pan. Turn the platter over and gently remove the cake pan, leaving flan on the serving platter. Using a flexible spatula, scrape up as much of the caramel as possible from the bottom of the pan and pour over the flan. Cut into triangular wedges and serve.

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