



In the Kitchen

with Barb Agee ~ May 2015

Fiesta Mexicana

Mexican food is known for its intense, varied flavors, wide use of spices, and rich, colorful ingredients. It blends regional cooking styles and ingredients with European influence. Mexico is the birthplace of chocolate, vanilla, many varieties of chilies, corn, beans and tomatoes. Spain and France introduced their taste for meat, onions and garlic into Mexican cooking to create vibrant cooking styles.



Mexican Chocolate Pudding Cake

1½ cups semisweet chocolate chips
½ cup butter
¾ cup granulated sugar
4 large eggs
1 cup all-purpose flour
½ teaspoon cinnamon
¼ teaspoon baking powder

½ teaspoon ground chili pepper
½ teaspoon kosher salt, divided
½ cup sliced almonds
2 teaspoons olive oil
1 teaspoon brown sugar
Vanilla Ice cream, *optional*

Preheat oven to 350°F.

Microwave chocolate and butter in a large microwave-safe bowl on HIGH 1 to 1½ minutes or until melted, stirring at 30-second intervals. Whisk in granulated sugar. Add eggs, 1 at a time, whisking just until blended after each addition. Whisk flour, cinnamon, baking powder, chili pepper and ¼ teaspoon salt together in a small bowl. Add to chocolate mixture.

Pour batter into a buttered 11 x7-inch baking dish. Stir together almonds, brown sugar and ¼ teaspoon salt; add in olive oil. Sprinkle over cake batter. Bake at 350°F for 22 to 25 minutes. Center will be soft. Cool on a wire rack for 10 minutes. Serve warm with ice cream. Serves 12

Orange Jicama Salad

3 quarts bite-size pieces romaine lettuce, rinsed and crisped
2 cans mandarin oranges, chilled and drained
1 cup red onion, slivered
1 cup peeled jicama, slivered

Dressing:

6 tablespoons fresh lime juice
½ cup orange marmalade
½ teaspoon hot chili flakes
¼ cup vegetable oil
Salt and pepper

In a large bowl, mix romaine lettuce, mandarin oranges, red onion and jicama. In a separate bowl, whisk lime juice, marmalade and chili flakes. Continuing to whisk add vegetable oil. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Drizzle dressing over salad greens and toss. Serves 8 to 10

Mexicali Meat Pie

6 slices Hempler bacon, chopped
1 pound ground sirloin
14 ounce can sweet whole kernel corn
½ cup red or green pepper, finely chopped
½ cup onion, finely chopped
4 ounce can green chilis, chopped
¼ cup corn meal
½ teaspoon dried oregano
½ teaspoon chili pepper
½ teaspoon smoked paprika
1 teaspoon kosher salt, divided
¼ teaspoon freshly ground pepper
8 ounce can tomato sauce
Pie Crust (*see recipe below*)
1 egg
¼ cup whole milk
½ teaspoon dry mustard
½ teaspoon green chili sauce
1½ cup cheddar cheese, shredded
⅓ cup stuffed olives, sliced

Preheat oven to 425°F.

Fry bacon until crisp; remove bacon and set aside. Drain off bacon fat, leaving 1 teaspoon in skillet. Brown ground sirloin in same skillet; drain. Return ground sirloin to skillet; stir in corn, green pepper, onion, ½ teaspoon salt, green chilis, cornmeal, oregano, chili powder, smoked paprika, salt, pepper and tomato sauce. Pie Crust (*see recipe below*). Place meat mixture in crust lined pie pan. Whisk together egg, milk, ½ teaspoon salt, dry mustard and green chili sauce. Spoon over meat mixture. Bake at 425°F for 25 minutes. Sprinkle cheese, bacon and green olives over pie. Bake another 5 minutes, until cheese has melted. Let stand 10 minutes before serving. *Makes 8 servings*

Pie Crust

1¼ cups all-purpose flour
2 tablespoons corn meal
⅓ shortening, lard or cold bacon drippings
¼ cup cold water

Combine flour and corn meal. Cut in shortening until mixture is the size of peas. Sprinkle water over mixture, stirring with fork until dough holds together. Form into a ball; flatten to ½-inch thick and edges are smooth. Roll out on floured surface to a circle 1½-inches larger than an 11 inch deep dish pie pan. Fit into pan. Fold edges up to form a standing rim; flute.

Spicy Black Beans And Rice

Two 14 ounce cans black beans, rinsed and drained**
1 tablespoon olive oil
½ pound smoked sausage, ½-inch chunks
¾ cup onion, small dice
¾ cup poblano chile
½ cup celery, small dice
2 tablespoons fresh thyme, chopped
5 large cloves garlic, finely chopped
6 ounces can lager-style beer
1 cup chicken stock
½ teaspoon ground red pepper
¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
½ cup green onions, thinly sliced and divided
1 tablespoon cider vinegar
2 cups hot cooked long-grain rice

Heat a large skillet over medium heat. Add oil to pan; swirl to coat. Add sausage, onion, chile, celery, thyme and garlic; sauté for 4 to 5 minutes to soften the onion and pepper. Stir in the beer and chicken stock; bring to a boil and cook for 5 minutes reducing liquid in half. Add beans, ground red pepper and black pepper. Reduce heat and simmer for 10 minutes. Stir in ¼ cup green onions and vinegar. Serve over rice; sprinkle with remaining green onions. May serve with shredded queso fresco or pepper jack cheese sprinkled over the top. *4 to 6 servings*

**May use red kidney beans

