**Mexican Dinner**

Menu

Starters:

Mexican Rollups

SW Cornmeal Cups

Cilantro-Lime Spinach Dip

(Alternate: Guacamole with Tortilla Chips)

Main:

Sloppy Chicken Tamales with Mole Sauce (I’m making this recipe.)

Chilies Rellenos

Sides:

Guacamole Salad

Black Bean-Roasted Pepper Salad

Mexican Rice

(Alternate: Santa Fe Coleslaw)

Desserts:

Tres Leches Cake

Chocolate Mexican Wedding Cakes

(Alternate: Coffee Flan)

**Recipes**

Diana’s Mexican Roll-Ups

Makes 24-36 pieces

Note: Make at least one day ahead.

8 ounces cream cheese, at room temperature

1 small can crushed pineapple, drained and dried on paper towels

1 small can chopped chilies, drained and dried on paper towels

2 tablespoons green onion, thinly sliced

¾ teaspoon cumin

¼ teaspoon salt

½ teaspoon sugar

1 cup Jack cheese, thinly shredded

4 to 6 large flour tortillas

chili powder

Mix with spatula all ingredients except tortillas and chili powder. Spread generously over tortillas. Roll as tightly as possible. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate overnight. Unwrap and cut into 8 to 10 pieces on the diagonal. Arrange on serving plate and sprinkle lightly with chili powder.

**Southwest Cornmeal Cups**

Makes 24 small tarts

Notes: Cornmeal cups can be made ahead but filled just before serving. Shells freeze well.

1 to 2 12-cup mini-muffin tin

3 ounces cream cheese, softened

¼ pound butter, softened

½ cup flour

½ cup fine yellow cornmeal

pinch salt

1 jar black bean and corn (or fruit) salsa

By hand, cream together cream cheese and butter. Blend in flour and cornmeal. Divide dough into 24 balls. Put one in each of 24 mini muffin tin depressions, pressing against bottom and sides to make a shell. Refrigerate for 20 minutes to prevent shrinkage.

Bake at 350-degrees for 20-25 minutes. Cool for 5 minutes; remove cups from tin. Fill with salsa.

**Cilantro-Lime Spinach Dip with Chipotle Chiles**

Notes: Buy a small can of chipotle in adobo in the Mexican section of your grocery store. Puree in food processor. Freeze remainder for another recipe. Can be made two days ahead.

½ to 1 tablespoon pureed chipotle chilies in adobo (See Note)

1 (10-ounce) box frozen chopped spinach, thawed and squeezed dry in a clean kitchen towel

½ cup sour cream

½ cup mayonnaise

3 tablespoons scallions, sliced thin

¼ cup fresh cilantro, chopped

1 teaspoon grated lime zest

1 tablespoon fresh lime juice

½ teaspoon light brown sugar

½ teaspoon ground cumin

1 teaspoon fresh garlic, pressed

½ teaspoon salt

¼ teaspoon pepper

1 bag tortilla or bean chips

Put all ingredients in a bowl of a food processor. Process until smooth and creamy. Serve with tortilla or bean chips

**Fresh Guacamole**

Serves 4

Note: Recipe should be make no more than a few hours ahead of serving.

2 small ripe avocados (If using medium to large avocados, increase the other ingredients accordingly, or to taste)

1 tablespoon minced red onion

1 small clove garlic, pressed

½ small jalapeno chili, minced

2 tablespoons minced fresh cilantro

salt and pepper

1+ tablespoon lime juice

1 bag blue corn chips with sesame seeds

Mash one avocado lightly with fork. Stir in ½ tablespoon lime juice. Mix in onion, garlic, jalapeno, cilantro and pinch salt. Chop the other avocado and toss with lime juice. Combine with mashed mixture. Adjust seasoning with salt and lime juice, if necessary. Refrigerate. Serve cool or at room temperature with blue corn chips.

**Chilies Rellenos**

Serves 4 as a main or 6-8 as a side dish

Note: Can be partially prepared one day ahead but don’t make the batter until just before baking.

8 ounces shredded Mexican cheese (Jack and Cheddar)

2 cans (7 ounces each) whole green chilies

4 eggs

½ cup milk

½ cup flour

1 teaspoon cumin

½ teaspoon baking powder

½ teaspoon salt

fresh pico de gallo salsa

Preheat oven to 350-degrees. Gently cut a slit through one side of the peppers, taking care not to cut all the way through. Open the peppers and lay them flat. Pat dry with paper towels. Spoon about 1 tablespoon cheese mixture on half of each pepper. Fold back up and place them in single layer inside an 8 by 8-inch greased casserole dish. Sprinkle half the remaining cheese over the peppers.

Prepare the batter by whisking together the eggs, milk, flour, cumin, baking powder and salt until smooth. Pour the batter over the cheese and sprinkle the remaining cheese over the top. Bake, uncovered, in the oven for about 30 minutes, or until the top is lightly golden. Cut into serving pieces and top topped with a dollop of pico de gallo salsa.

**Guacamole Salad**

See recipe for Fresh Guacamole above.

Omit tortilla chips. Prepare individual servings on Boston lettuce leaves

**Black Bean and Roasted Pepper Salad**

Serves 4

Note: Can be partially made one day ahead.

2 large red bell peppers, roasted

¼ cup rice vinegar

1 tablespoon each: water, olive oil, honey

½ teaspoon chili oil

1 15-ounce can black beans, rinsed and drained

3/4 cup cooked corn

8 grape tomatoes, quartered

2 tablespoons minced cilantro

1 tablespoon green onion, thinly sliced

salt

Boston lettuce

Sauce:

½ cup sour cream

2 teaspoons fresh lime juice

milk

salt

Cut peppers into quarters; slice each crosswise into thin strips. In a medium bowl, whisk vinegar, water, olive oil, honey and chili oil. Add beans, corn and peppers; mix gently but thoroughly. Cover and refrigerate overnight.

Sauce: Mix together sour cream, lime juice and enough milk to make a thick drizzle. Add salt and additional lime juice to taste. Cover and refrigerate overnight.

To serve, stir tomatoes, cilantro and onion into bean mixture. Spoon individual servings of bean salad over Boston lettuce leaves. Drizzle with sauce.

**Mexican Rice (**Cook’s Illustrated, adapted)

Serves 8 to 12

1 14-ounce can S&W Stewed Mexican Tomatoes

1 medium onion, chopped

1 to 2 medium jalapeno chilies

2 cups long-grain rice

1/3 cup corn oil

3 medium garlic cloves, minced

2 cups low-sodium chicken broth

1 tablespoon tomato paste

salt to taste

½ cup minced fresh cilantro leaves

Drain liquid from stewed tomatoes and discard. Chop tomatoes in food processor leaving some small pieces. Transfer mixture to measuring cup. Add water if necessary to make 2 cups liquid. Remove ribs and seeds from jalapenos and mince.

Place rice in large fine-mesh strainer and rinse under cold running water until water runs clear, about 1 ½ minutes. Shake rice vigorously in strainer to remove all excess water.

Heat oil in large heavy-bottomed oven safe 12-inch straight-sided sauté pan or Dutch oven with tight-fitting lid over medium-high heat, 1 to 2 minutes. Drop few grains rice in oil; if grains sizzle, oil is ready. Add rice and chopped onions and sauté, stirring frequently, until rice is light golden, about 6 to 8 minutes. . Reduce heat to medium, add garlic and 2/3 of diced jalapenos; cook, stirring constantly, until fragrant, about 1 ½ minutes. Stir in tomato-onion mixture, chicken broth and tomato paste. Add salt to taste. Bring to boil. Cover pan and transfer to middle rack of a preheated 350-degree oven. Bake until liquid is absorbed and rice is tender, about 25 minutes. Stir rice after 12 minutes.

Stir in cilantro and reserved minced jalapeno. Serve immediately.

**Santa Fe Coleslaw**

Serves 8 to 10

1 pound green cabbage, finely shredded

1 medium cucumber, peeled, seeded and cut in thin diagonal slices

5 scallions, thinly sliced on the diagonal

1 medium red bell pepper, julienne

1 medium yellow bell pepper, julienne

2 celery ribs, peeled and thinly sliced on the diagonal

1 large carrot, shredded

1 small white onion, cut into thin slivers

Dressing:

¼ cup lime juice

2 tablespoons cider vinegar

½ - ¾ teaspoon hot pepper sauce

2 tablespoons sugar

2 tablespoons olive oil

1 teaspoon salt

Soak onion in salted water for 30 minutes; drain, rinse and dry with paper towels.

Combine vegetables. Whisk dressing ingredients until sugar is dissolved. Toss vegetables with dressing. Let stand at room temperature for 30 minutes, then refrigerate for 1 hour. Toss often and just before serving.

**Tres Leches (Milk Cake)**

**Makes one 9 by 13-inch cake**

**Note: Watch video on allrecipes.com**

**INGREDIENTS:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour  1 teaspoon baking powder  1/2 cup unsalted butter  1 cup white sugar  5 eggs  1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract | 2 cups whole milk  1 (14 ounce) can sweetened condensed  milk  1 (12 fluid ounce) can evaporated milk  1 1/2 cups heavy whipping cream  1 cup white sugar  1 teaspoon vanilla extract |

**DIRECTIONS:**

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| **1.** | Preheat oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C). Grease and flour one 9x13 inch baking pan. |
| **2.** | Sift flour and baking powder together and set aside. |
| **3.** | Cream butter or margarine and the 1 cup sugar together until fluffy. Add eggs and the 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract; beat well. |
| **4.** | Add the flour mixture to the butter mixture 2 tablespoons at a time; mix until well blended. Pour batter into prepared pan. |
| **5.** | Bake at 350 degrees F (175 degrees C) for 30 minutes. Pierce cake several times with a fork. |
| **6.** | Combine the whole milk, condensed milk, and evaporated milk together. Pour over the top of the cooled cake. |
| **7.** | Whip whipping cream, the remaining 1 cup of the sugar, and the remaining 1 teaspoon vanilla together until thick. Spread over the top of cake. Be sure and keep cake refrigerated, enjoy! |

**Mexican Chocolate Wedding Cakes (Cookies)**

# Makes 40 cookies

Notes: Can be made a few days ahead. Freezes well.

3/4 cup brown sugar

1 cup butter, softened

1 egg, room temperature

3 ounces unsweetened baking chocolate, melted

1 teaspoon vanilla

2 cups flour

1 cup finely chopped nuts

¼ teaspoon salt

1 cup powdered sugar or

½ cup sweetened cocoa + ½ cup powdered sugar

Preheat oven to 350-degrees. In food processor beat sugar, butter, egg and vanilla until light and fluffy, scraping bowl. Add melted chocolate and vanilla. Continue beating until well-mixed. Add flour and salt turn on/off until blended. Stir in nuts.

Shape rounded teaspoonfuls of dough into 1-inch balls. Place 2 inches apart on cookie sheets. Bake 8 to10 minutes or until set. Carefully transfer to wire rack; cool 10 minutes. Roll in powdered sugar or sugar cocoa mixture (cookies will still be warm), then cool and roll again in powdered sugar mixture.

Kahlua Flan  
Recipe courtesy Emeril Lagasse, 2003

Serves 6 to 8 servings  
  
Ingredients  
3/4 cup sugar  
4 large eggs  
1 (14-ounce) can sweetened condensed milk  
1 (12-ounce) can evaporated milk  
2 tablespoons coffee-flavored liqueur (recommended: Kahlua)  
Mexican chocolate shavings and cocoa powder, garnish

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F.  
  
In a small saucepan, cook the sugar over medium heat until it starts to melt. Lower the heat and cook until caramelized to a golden brown. (Do not stir or touch the sugar, but swirl the pan to melt evenly.)  
  
Pour into a metal flan mold or 9-inch cake pan. Turn the dish and swirl to evenly coat the bottom. Let caramel cool and harden.  
  
Place the dish in a larger roasting pan and add hot water to come halfway up the sides of the baking dish. In a large bowl, whisk the eggs. Add the condensed and evaporated milks and Kahlua and whisk well to blend. Pour into the prepared pan. Bake until set and just firm in the center but still jiggles slightly, 50 minutes to 1 hour. Let cool on a wire rack. Refrigerate until well chilled, at least 2 hours.  
  
To serve, run a thin sharp knife around the rim of the flan. Place a platter or large plate on top of the flan and gently flip over so the plate is on the bottom. Lift away the mold. Garnish with powdered cocoa and top with Mexican chocolate shavings.  
  
Cut into wedges and serve immediately.