

Here Comes Company - Mexican Inspired Menu

From Mel's Kitchen Cafe
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All the recipes have been modified to feed groups of about 10. Keep in mind, this is just an average number. You'll want to adjust the recipes accordingly if you are feeding more than that or if the 10-ish people are big eaters/little eaters.

Here Comes Company - Mexican Inspired Plan

	Chile Verde Mexican Stewed Pork	Mexican Rice	Fluffy Cornbread & Honey Butter	Mexican Tomato and Corn Salad	Chocolate Tres Leches Cake
One Week in Advance					
24 Hours in Advance	If preparing in the crockpot: {9 hours before} Brown the pork and place the pork, garlic and onions in the slow cooker.		Whip together the honey butter ingredients. Keep covered at room temperature until ready to serve.		Make cake and cool. Pour on the milk mixture and let sit overnight in the refrigerator.
12 Hours in Advance			Make the cornbread. Cool and keep covered at room temperature.		
4-6 Hours Before Serving	If preparing in the oven: {4 hours before} Brown the pork. Add in all the other recipe ingredients plus 1/2 cup water. Stir to combine. Cover the pot and cook in the oven at 300 degrees for 3-4 hours.			Make salad. Refrigerate.	
1-2 Hours Before Serving	Remove the roast. Shred it into bite-size pieces. Reduce the sauce and add back to the pork. Keep the pork warm until ready to serve. <i>{15 minutes before}</i> Warm the tortillas and prepare any additional toppings: Shredded cheese, sour cream, avocados, lettuce, etc.	<i>{1 hour before}</i> Make the rice and cover until ready to serve.	Slice the cornbread (warm slightly, if desired) and place on a plate or platter. Serve with the honey butter.		Whip and sweeten the cream. Refrigerate until cake is served.

The Recipes

Chili Verde {Mexican Stewed Pork}

INGREDIENTS

- 2 tablespoons canola oil
- 5 pounds boneless pork roast, trimmed of as much fat as possible
- Salt and pepper for seasoning roast
- 2 yellow onions, chopped
- 5 cloves garlic, finely minced or crushed
- 1 (15 oz.) can green enchilada sauce
- 2 (4 oz.) cans diced green chilies
- 2 (14 oz.) cans diced tomatoes with green chilies
- 1 beef bouillon cube (or 1 teaspoon beef bouillon granules)
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- ½ teaspoon black pepper

DIRECTIONS

1. Cut the roast into 3-4 large chunks. Season the pork generously with salt and pepper on all sides. In a large heavy pot, the oil over medium heat until the oil is shimmering and hot. Add the pork, being careful not to crowd the pot (brown the pork in shifts, if needed). Brown the pork on all sides until golden and well-browned, about 30 seconds to a minute on each side. Leave the roast in the pot and add the onion and garlic. Cook for 1-2 minutes, stirring often. Place the pork and garlic and onions in the slow cooker (read below for oven-roasting method). Stir in the rest of the ingredients to the slow cooker. Cover and cook on low for 8-9 hours. After the roast has cooked for the allotted time, remove the roast. Shred it into bite-size pieces and set aside, covered with foil to keep warm. Pour the remaining liquid and ingredients from the slow cooker into a large saucepan. Bring the mixture to a boil on the stove, and simmer vigorously over medium-low or medium heat for 20-30 minutes, stirring often to prevent sticking or burning, until the mixture considerably reduced and thickened. Add the pork roast and sauce back to the slow cooker. Stir to coat the pork with the sauce. Turn the crockpot to low or high and allow the pork to heat through again. Serve with warm tortillas and desired toppings, such as sour cream, cheese, avocados, lettuce, tomatoes.
2. *Oven-roasting Instructions:* When beginning the recipe, make sure to use an oven-safe pot for the browning (such as a large enameled cast-iron pot). Follow the recipe up until the point of adding the pork to the slow cooker. Instead, keep the pork in the oven-safe pot. Add in all the other recipe ingredients plus 1/2 cup water. Stir to combine. Cover the pot and cook in the oven at 300 degrees for 3-4 hours. When finished cooking, remove the roast as directed in the above instructions. Follow the recipe to reduce the sauce.

Mexican Rice

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cup of long grain white rice
- 4 cups of low-sodium chicken broth
- 2 tablespoons of olive oil
- 2 small yellow onions, diced
- 8 cloves of garlic, finely minced
- 1/2 cup of tomato paste
- 2 tablespoons of lime juice
- 1 cup of freshly chopped cilantro
- 4 teaspoons cumin
- Salt to taste

DIRECTIONS

1. In a large pot, add rice and chicken broth. Bring to a boil over high heat. Stir. Cover the pot, lower the heat to low and simmer for 17-20 minutes. Remove from heat and keep the pot covered for 5 more minutes.
2. While the rice is cooking, heat the olive oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium heat. Cook the onions in the hot oil for 10 minutes, until translucent and starting to brown. Add the garlic to the skillet and cook for one minute, stirring constantly. Stir in the tomato paste and cumin and cook for another minute or two. Mix in hot, cooked rice, lime juice and cilantro. Mix until well combined. Season to taste with salt. Serve immediately.

Fluffy Cornbread & Honey Butter

INGREDIENTS

Cornbread:

- ½ cup cornmeal
- 1 ½ cup flour
- 2/3 cup sugar
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1/3 cup oil
- 3 tablespoons butter, melted
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 1 ¼ cup milk

Honey Butter:

- 2 sticks butter, softened
- 1/2 cup honey
- 1/2 cup marshmallow fluff or crème

DIRECTIONS

1. For the cornbread, in a large bowl, whisk together the dry ingredients. Make a well and add oil, butter, eggs, and milk into the center. Stir until just mixed (batter will be runny – don't be alarmed!). Bake in an 9X13-inch square pan at 350 degrees for 40-45 minutes.
2. For the honey butter, whip together all the ingredients with an electric mixer until light and fluffy. Store covered at room temperature for up to 12 hours (or in the refrigerator for longer, take out several hours in advance to soften).

Mexican Tomato and Corn Salad

Note: Queso fresco cheese is a widely available Mexican cheese usually found in most supermarkets by the other cheeses - it is usually in a round, thick disc. If you can't find it or don't like it, feta cheese would make a unique and delicious substitution.

INGREDIENTS

For the salad:

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 1/2 cups fresh or frozen corn kernels
- 2 cups halved grape or cherry tomatoes
- 1 cup crumbled queso fresco cheese
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro
- Salt, pepper and sugar to taste

For the dressing:

- 1 tablespoon freshly grated lime zest (zest the lime(s) before juicing)
- 1 tablespoon fresh lime juice
- 1 tablespoon white wine vinegar
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 tablespoon minced garlic (from about 3 garlic cloves)

DIRECTIONS

1. In a large skillet, heat the 1 tablespoon olive oil over medium heat. Stir in the corn and cook until soft (but not mushy), 3-5 minutes, stirring/tossing occasionally. Cool corn slightly and set aside.
2. Whisk together the lime zest, lime juice, vinegar, 1 tablespoon olive oil and garlic in a small bowl.
3. In a medium bowl, combine the tomatoes, cheese, cilantro and corn. Toss the salad with the vinaigrette and season with salt, pepper and sugar to taste.

Chocolate Tres Leches Cake

Note: I used one of my favorite (easy and egg-free) chocolate cakes for this recipe. But you could really use any 9X13-inch chocolate cake recipe, in fact, the beauty of this recipe is that because of the chocolate milk mixture poured on top of the cake, the cake part is especially forgiving (overbaked a little? No problem.). By the way, this cake can (and should) be made in advance - up to 24 hours. Sweet!

INGREDIENTS

Cake:

- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 1/2 cups granulated sugar
- 1/2 cup natural cocoa powder
- 1 1/2 teaspoons baking soda
- 3/4 teaspoon salt
- 2/3 cup vegetable or canola oil
- 2 tablespoons distilled white vinegar
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 2 cups water

Chocolate Milk Mixture:

- 1 (14-ounce) can sweetened condensed milk
- 6 ounces semisweet or bittersweet chocolate, chopped (about 1 cup)
- 1 (12-ounce) can evaporated milk
- 1/3 cup whipping cream or half-and-half
- Sweetened whipped cream
- Cocoa powder for dusting

DIRECTIONS

1. For the cake, adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 350 degrees. Coat a 9X13-inch baking pan with nonstick cooking spray. Whisk flour, sugar, cocoa, baking soda, and salt together in the baking pan.
2. Make 1 large and 2 small craters in dry ingredients. Add oil to large crater and vinegar and vanilla separately to remaining small craters. Pour water into pan and mix until just a few streaks of flour remain. Use a rubber spatula to spread the batter evenly in the pan if it isn't level after mixing. Immediately put pan in oven.
3. Bake until toothpick inserted in center of cake comes out with a few moist crumbs attached, about 23-25 minutes. Remove the cake from the oven and let it cool in the pan on a wire rack until cooled completely.
4. Using a bamboo skewer or tines of a fork, poke holes all over the top of the cake. In a glass liquid measure or a microwave-safe bowl, combine the sweetened condensed milk and the chocolate. Microwave for one minute and stir. If not completely melted and smooth, microwave for an additional 30 seconds until melted and smooth. Whisk in the evaporated milk and heavy cream (or half-and-half). The mixture will start out very, very thick. Don't worry! It will thin out as you whisk in the other milks.
5. Slowly pour or ladle spoonfuls of the chocolate mixture over the top of the cake. Let the liquid absorb before adding more. Ladle the liquid onto the cake until all the chocolate mixture has been used. It's ok if there is excess liquid pooled on top of the cake, it should absorb into the cake while it is refrigerated.
6. Cover the cake with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 2 hours and up to 24 hours.
7. Serve pieces of the cake with sweetened whipped cream and a dusting of cocoa powder.