

This week we have a few recipes for your Cinco de Mayo celebration.

Let us know if there is something you would like us to put in our column, or if you have a recipe to share, please submit to ads@thedrummer.com.

Classic Margarita

Level: Easy

Total: 5 min

Active: 5 min

Yield: 8 servings

Combine 1-3/4 cups silver tequila, 1 cup fresh lime juice, 3/4 cup light agave syrup and 1/3 cup water in a pitcher; stir. (You can refrigerate the drink up to 1 day ahead.) Serve over ice in salt-rimmed glasses; garnish with lime wedges.

Baja Style Fish Tacos

Level: Easy

Total: 50 min

Prep: 20 min

Inactive: 15 min

Cook: 15 min

Yield: 6 to 8 servings

Beer Batter:

1 c. all-purpose flour
1 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. ground black pepper
1 c. dark Mexican beer*

Cream Sauce:

1/3 c. mayonnaise
2/3 c. Mexican crema** or sour cream
1 tsp. grated lemon zest
2 T. fresh lemon juice
2 T. water
Salt & freshly ground black pepper

Fish Tacos:

Oil, for frying
1 c. all-purpose flour
1 tsp. salt, plus more for seasoning
2 lbs. skinned halibut cut into 5"x1/2" strips
Freshly ground black pepper
Corn tortillas
2 c. shredded cabbage
2 c. tomatillo salsa (store-bought or homemade) for garnish, opt.
Pickled jalapenos, for garnish, opt.

For the Beer Batter: Mix the flour, salt and pepper in a medium bowl. Gradually add in the beer while whisking. Set aside and let the batter rest for 15 minutes before using.

For Cream Sauce: Add the mayonnaise and crema to a medium bowl. Whisk in the lemon zest, lemon juice and water. Season, to taste, with salt and pepper (can be made 3 days ahead, covered and refrigerated).

For the Fish: In a large skillet, over medium heat, add enough oil to reach a depth of 1-inch. Heat the oil until a deep-fry thermometer registers 350 degrees F or when the end of a wooden spoon sizzles when inserted into the oil.

On a large plate, combine the flour and salt. Season the fish pieces all over with salt and pepper and coat with the flour. Working in batches, dip the fillets in the beer batter and coat on both sides. Fry in the hot oil until golden brown and cooked through, about 5 minutes. Transfer to paper towels to drain.

Make tacos with the tortillas and fish and top each with cream, shredded cabbage, tomatillo salsa and pickled jalapenos, if desired.

***Cook's Note:** Crack open a cold Mexican cerveza, to make this tasty beer batter, which will change the way you think about fried fish! You can use it for vegetables, too.

****Cook's Note:** Mexican Crema is Mexico's version of creme fraiche and is found at many supermarkets and can easily be substituted with sour cream.

Beef and Bean Burritos

Level: Easy

Total: 35 min

Active: 35 min

Yield: 6 to 8 servings

1 med. onion, diced
2 lbs. ground beef
1/2 tsp. ground cumin
1/4 tsp. chili powder

1/4 tsp. ground oregano
1/4 tsp. salt
3 (7 oz.) cans Mexican tomato sauce or enchilada sauce
1 (28 oz.) can refried beans
3/4 c. grated Cheddar, plus extra for sprinkling
12 burrito-size flour tortillas
1/2 c. fresh cilantro leaves

Preheat the oven to 170 to 180 degrees F.

In a large skillet over medium heat, cook the onions until softened. Then add the ground beef and cook until the beef is cooked through. Add the cumin, chili powder, oregano and salt and stir to combine. Pour 2 cans of the Mexican tomato sauce into the meat and simmer over low heat for 5 minutes. Add a little water if the mixture gets too dry.

Meanwhile, heat the refried beans in a saucepan over medium-low heat. Add the cheese and stir it in till its melted. Remove from the heat.

Heat the tortillas in the microwave for 1 minute, and then spread a small amount of beans on each tortilla. Add a small amount of the meat. Fold over the ends of the tortilla, and then roll them up. Repeat with the rest of the tortillas. Then place them in a large baking dish, cover with foil and keep warm in the oven.

When ready to serve, drizzle the remaining can of tomato sauce over all the burritos and sprinkle with more grated Cheddar. Return to the oven for a couple of minutes just to melt the cheese.

Sprinkle the tops with the cilantro leaves and serve immediately.

Chicken Enchiladas with Roasted Tomatillo Chile Salsa

Level: Easy

Total: 1 hr

Prep: 15 min

Cook: 45 min

Roasted Tomatillo Chile Salsa:

1 lb. tomatillos, husked
1 white onion, peeled, sliced, quartered or whole
4 garlic cloves
2 jalapenos
2 tsp. ground cumin
1 tsp. salt
1/2 c. chopped cilantro leaves
1/2 lime, juiced

Enchiladas:

Extra-virgin olive oil
1/2 med. onion, diced
3 garlic cloves, chopped
1-1/2 tsp. ground cumin
1/4 c. all-purpose flour
2 c. chicken stock, store-bought
Chopped cilantro leaves
1 deli roasted chicken (about 3 lbs.), boned, meat shredded
Salt
Freshly ground black pepper
10 large flour tortillas
1/2 lb. Monterey Jack cheese, shredded
2 c. sour cream
Chopped tomatoes & cilantro leaves, for garnish

Spicy Black Beans:

2 c. (about 1 lb.) dried black beans, picked over, soaked overnight
3 T. extra-virgin olive oil
1/2 med. onion, diced
1 jalapeno pepper, chopped
2 cloves garlic, chopped
1 bay leaf
Kosher salt
freshly ground black pepper

Yellow Rice:

2 c. long-grain rice
4 c. water
2 cloves garlic, smashed
1 T. turmeric
1 tsp. kosher salt
1 bay leaf

Preheat oven to 400 degrees F.

For the salsa: On a baking tray, roast tomatillos, onion, garlic, and jalapenos for 12 to 15 minutes. Transfer the roasted vegetables and any juices on the bottom of the tray to a food processor. Add the cumin, salt, cilantro, and lime juice and pulse mixture until well combined but still chunky.

For the enchiladas: Meanwhile heat a 2 count of olive oil in a medium saucepan over medium heat. Add the onion and cook until soft and caramelized - this should take 5 to 7 minutes. Add the garlic and cumin then cook for a further minute. Sprinkle on the flour and stir to ensure the flour doesn't burn then gradually add the chicken stock to make a velouté. Continue stirring over a low simmer until the flour cooks and the liquid thickens. Turn off the heat, add half of the roasted tomatillo chile salsa, some additional fresh chopped cilantro and fold in the shredded chicken meat. Season, to taste, with salt and pepper.

Change the temperature of the oven to 350 degrees F and begin assembling the dish. Take a large flameproof baking dish and smear the bottom with some of the reserved tomatillo salsa. Now take the flour tortillas and briefly flash them over the stove-top flame (or put them briefly under the broiler if using an electric stove). Using a shallow bowl, coat each tortilla lightly with the reserved salsa mix. Put a scoop of the shredded chicken-enchilada mix on top of the tortilla followed by a sprinkle of the shredded cheese. Fold the tortilla over the filling and roll like a cigar to enclose it. Using a spatula place the tortillas in the baking dish and continue to do the same with all the tortillas. Finally pour over some more of the salsa and top with the remaining shredded cheese. Bake uncovered for about 30 minutes until bubbly and cracked on top. Garnish, cilantro, and tomato.

Serve hot with Spicy Black Beans and Yellow Rice, the remaining tomatillo salsa, sour cream, and fresh guacamole, if desired.

Spicy Black Beans: In a large pot, soak beans overnight covered in water by 2 inches. Drain and set aside.

In the same pot, heat the olive oil. Add the onion, jalapeno pepper, garlic, and bay leaf and cook until the vegetables begin to soften, about 5 minutes. Add the beans and cover with water by about 1-inch. Bring to a boil, reduce the heat, cover, and simmer for 1 to 1-1/2 hours, or until the beans are tender. Remove the bay leaf and discard. Taste the beans and season with salt and pepper.

Yellow Rice: Put all the ingredients into a heavy-bottomed pot, stir well, and bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Reduce the heat to a simmer, cover, and cook over low heat until the rice has absorbed the water, about 15 to 20 minutes. Remove from the heat and let sit, covered, for 5 minutes. Discard the garlic and bay leaf, fluff with a fork, and serve.

Jalapeno Radish Slaw

Level: Easy

Total: 15 min

Prep: 15 min

Toss 1 head shredded cabbage and 1 bunch thinly sliced radishes with 2 tablespoons olive oil, 1 teaspoon salt and the juice of 1/2 lime; let sit 15 minutes. Just before serving, toss with 1 small bunch chopped cilantro and 1 to 2 thinly sliced jalapenos.

Chunky Guacamole

Level: Easy

Total: 1 hr 15 min

Prep: 15 min

Inactive: 1 hr

Yield: 4 servings

4 ripe avocados
3 limes, juiced
1/2 red onion, chopped
1 garlic clove, minced
2 serrano chiles, sliced thinly
1 big handful fresh cilantro, finely chopped
Extra-virgin olive oil
Kosher salt & freshly ground black pepper

Halve and pit the avocados. Scoop out the flesh with a tablespoon into a mixing bowl. Mash the avocados with a fork, leaving them somewhat chunky. Add the remaining ingredients, and fold everything together to gently mix. Lay a piece of plastic wrap right on the surface of the guacamole so it doesn't brown and refrigerate 1 hour before serving.

Fried Tortillas with Chocolate Sauce

Level: Intermediate

Total: 35 min

Prep: 20 min

Cook: 15 min

Yield: 24 pieces

For the Sauce:

1/2 c. packed light brown sugar
Pinch of kosher salt
1/2 c. unsweetened cocoa powder
3 T. unsalted butter
1/2 tsp. vanilla extract

For the Sopaipillas:

Vegetable oil, for frying
4 8-to-10-inch flour tortillas, cut into wedges or strips
Granulated sugar, for coating

Make the sauce: Bring 1/4 cup water, the brown sugar and salt to a boil in a small saucepan, stirring until the sugar dissolves. Whisk in the cocoa powder until smooth. Remove from the heat and stir in the butter and vanilla. (You can refrigerate the sauce, covered, up to 3 days; reheat before serving.)

Make the sopaipillas: Heat 1/2 inch vegetable oil in a large deep skillet until a deep-fry thermometer registers 350 degrees F. Working in batches, fry the tortillas, turning once, until bubbly and golden on both sides, 1 to 2 minutes per batch. (Return the oil to 350 degrees F between batches.) Transfer to a paper towel-lined plate and sprinkle both sides generously with granulated sugar. Drizzle with the chocolate sauce.

Flan

Level: Intermediate

Total: 6 hr 25 min

Prep: 30 min

Inactive: 5 hr

Cook: 55 min

Yield: 6 servings

1-1/2 c. sugar
2 T. water
1/2 lemon, juiced
2 c. heavy cream
1 cinnamon stick
1 vanilla bean, split & scraped
3 lg. eggs
2 lg. egg yolks
Pinch salt

To make the caramel: have ready a 2-quart round flan mold and a large roasting pan. Combine 1 cup of the sugar and 2 tablespoons of water in a heavy-bottomed pot or pan. Place over medium-high heat and cook until the sugar begins to melt. Swirl the pan over the heat until the syrup darkens to a medium amber color, about 10 minutes; don't stir with a spoon. Remove from the heat and immediately add the lemon juice, swirl the pan again to combine, and then pour into the flan mold. Tilt the dish so that the caramel evenly coats the bottom and a bit up the sides, place in the roasting pan and set aside.

Preheat the oven to 325 degrees F, bring a kettle of water to a boil for the water bath and keep it hot.

Combine the cream, cinnamon, and vanilla in a small saucepan over medium-low flame. Bring the cream to a brief simmer, stirring occasionally. Take care not to let the cream come to a full boil to prevent it from spilling over.

In a large bowl, cream together the whole eggs and yolks with the remaining 1/2 cup of sugar; add a pinch of salt. Whisk until the mixture is pale yellow and thick. Temper the egg mixture by gradually whisking in the hot cream mixture; don't add it too quickly or the eggs will cook. Pass the mixture through a strainer into a large measuring cup to ensure that the flan will be perfectly smooth. Pour the custard into the caramel-coated mold.

To create the water bath: pour the hot (not boiling) water into the roasting pan to come halfway up the side of the mold; be careful not get water into the custard. Carefully transfer to the middle oven rack, and bake for 30 to 45 minutes, until the custard is barely set and just jiggles slightly. Let the flan cool in the water bath, then refrigerate for at least 4 hours or overnight.

When you are ready to serve, run a knife around the inside of the mold to loosen the flan. Place a dessert plate on top of the flan and invert to pop it out.

Quote of the Week:

“Your talent is God’s gift to you. What you do with it is your gift back to God.”

~ Leo Buscaglia