

FOOD

The Portland Observer respectfully requests all comments and family recipes that you would like to share. Please address them in e-mail to sharons@portlandobserver.com.



¡Viva Cinco de Mayo!

What began as a provincial Mexican holiday has become a fiesta celebrated throughout North America. Many Americans believe that Cinco de Mayo ("May 5th" in Spanish) commemorates Mexico's independence from Spain. In fact, it began as a local holiday that celebrated Mexico's defeat of the French army at the Battle of Puebla in 1862. America's fondness for ethnic traditions of all stripes, the overwhelming popularity of Mexican cuisine, and the recent rebirth of

Mexican pride on both sides of the Rio Grande make Cinco de Mayo a larger and more widely celebrated festival each year. Cinco de Mayo is full of celebratory music and dance, delicious food and drinks galore; it unites communities with parades, mariachi bands, piñatas, cultural art and brightly colored traditional costumes that electrify cheering crowds.



Cinco de Mayo is a celebration of Mexican pride and unity. It calls for an authentic, muy bueno Mexican feast. Try these delicious dishes at your celebration!

Taco Seasoning

"Depending on how spicy you and your family like your dishes, use as little or as much as you want."



Ingredients

- 1 Tbs. chili powder
- 1/4 tsp. garlic powder
- 1/4 tsp. onion powder
- 1/4 tsp. crushed red pepper flakes
- 1/4 tsp. dried oregano
- 1/2 tsp. paprika
- 1 1/2 tsp. ground cumin
- 1 tsp. sea salt
- 1 tsp. black pepper

Directions

In a small bowl, mix together chili powder, garlic powder, onion powder, red pepper flakes, oregano, paprika, cumin, salt and pepper. Store seasoning in an airtight container.

Taqueria Style Tacos - Carne Asada

"This is a great recipe for authentic Mexican taqueria style carne asada tacos (beef tacos). These are served on the soft corn tortillas, unlike the American version of tacos. Try a squeeze of lime; it adds a little more zip."



Ingredients

- Marinade
- 3 pounds flank steak
- 1/3 cup white vinegar
- 1/2 cup soy sauce
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 limes, juiced
- 1/2 cup olive oil
- 3 Tbs. taco seasoning recipe
- Onion Relish
- 1 white onion, chopped
- 1/2 cup chopped fresh cilantro
- 1 lime, juiced
- Roasted Vegetables
- 2 large tomatoes, chopped
- 2 jalapeno peppers, chopped
- 1 white onion, quartered
- 4 cloves garlic, peeled
- 4 dried New Mexico chile pods
- 1 pinch salt and pepper to taste
- 1 (32 ounce) package corn tortillas
- 2 cups grated cotija cheese (optional)
- 2 limes cut into wedges

Directions

1. Lay the flank steak in a large glass baking dish. In a medium bowl, whisk together the vinegar, soy sauce, 4 cloves of garlic, juice of two limes, and olive oil. Season with taco seasoning recipe. Whisk until well blended, and then pour over the steak in the dish. Turn over once to coat both sides. Cover with plastic wrap, and marinate for 1 to 8 hours.
2. In a small bowl, stir together 1 chopped white onion, cilantro, and the juice of 1 lime. Set aside to use as a relish for the tacos.
3. Heat a skillet over medium-high heat. Toast chile pods in the skillet for a few minutes, and then remove to a bowl of water to soak for about 30 minutes. Preheat the oven to 450 degrees F (230 degrees C).
4. Place the tomatoes, 1 onion, jalapenos, and 4 cloves of garlic onto a baking sheet. Roast in the oven for about 20 minutes, until toasted but not burnt. Place the roasted vegetables, and soaked chile pods into a blender or food processor, along with salt and pepper. Puree until smooth.
5. Heat vegetable oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Cut the marinated flank steak into cubes or strips. Cook, stirring constantly, until the meat is cooked through and most of the liquid has evaporated.
6. Warm the tortillas in a skillet for about a minute on each side to make them pliable. Tortillas may also be warmed in a microwave oven. Arrange two or three tortillas on a plate, and lay a generous amount of beef over them. Top with a sprinkle of the onion relish and a large spoonful of the pureed salsa. Add as much cheese as you like. Garnish with lime wedges, and serve.

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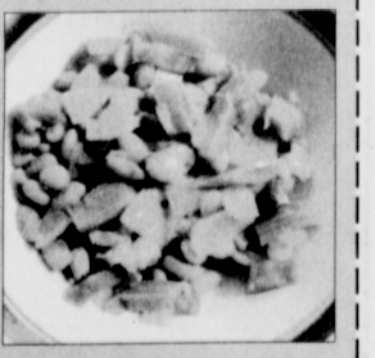
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SUNDAY SLOW COOKER COLLECTION

Mexican pintos with cactus



"Try this honest Mexican recipe for pinto beans using bacon, chilies and cactus."

Ingredients

- 2 cups dry pinto beans, rinsed
- 3 tablespoons salt; divided
- 3 slices bacon, chopped
- 2 large flat cactus leaves (nopales)
- 1 jalapeno pepper, seeded and chopped
- 2 slices onion

Directions

1. Place the pinto beans into a slow cooker, and fill to the top with hot water. Add the bacon, 2 tablespoons of salt, jalapeno and onion. Cover, and cook on High for 3 to 4 hours, adding water as needed, until beans are tender.
2. Remove any thorns from the cactus leaves, and slice into small pieces. Place in a saucepan with 1 tablespoon of salt, and fill with enough water to cover. Bring to a boil, and cook for 15 minutes. Drain and rinse with cold water for 1 minute. Add to the beans when they are soft, and cook for 15 more minutes on High.