**MEXICAN RECIPES**

**by Yolanda Higgins, Marcia Mudd, Carmen Jenkins**

*In modern Mexico and here in Chillicothe, the electric blender or food processor has made preparing salsa a lot less grinding.*

*Seasoning*

*It’s nice to have a container on hand with 1 tablespoon of onion, garlic, pepper and 2 tablespoons of salt. It’s can be used for grilling all meats, vegetables and dishes below.*

**Salsa**

*If you roast your tomatoes, peppers, onion and garlic and put into a blender you will get a whole new flavor!*

One 16 oz. can Whole Peeled Tomatoes

1-medium Jalapeno, Serrano, or any favorite pepper (more or less…depends on how hot you like it)

5-green onions (optional) or 1 tsp. onion powder

2-cloves garlic or 1 tsp. garlic powder

½-teaspoon salt

¼ -teaspoon pepper

2-tablespoons snipped cilantro (more or less…depends on how much you like)

In a food processer or blender combine tomato, onion, garlic, salt and pepper. Next add cilantro and chopped jalapeno pepper. Makes 4 cups.

**Flour Tortillas**

Tortillas – plain, buttered, or wrapped around a variety of fillings are found on Mexican tables at nearly every meal. Also tasty is peanut butter in a tortilla, fried tortillas scrambled with eggs, quesadilla’s, or as a side to scoop up mole! Many times tortillas are used instead of silverware.

1-cups all-purpose flour

1-teaspoon salt

1-teaspoon baking powder

1-tablespoon lard

¾-cup warm water

In mixing bowl stir together flour, salt, and baking powder. Cut lard into the mixture with your fingers until it feels blended. Add ¾ cup warm water a little at a time until dough can be gathered into a ball. Let dough rest 15 minutes. Divide dough into 10-12 portions; shape into balls. On a lightly floured surface, roll each ball flattened and round. They won’t be perfectly round as you start making them. It takes practice, practice, practice, but they will still taste good! Cook in ungreased skillet over medium heat about 1½ minutes per side (wait until the tortilla bubble before flipping).

**Frijoles Refritos (Refried Beans)**

*Dried beans are an essential staple for most Mexicans. Fresh dried beans should be a nice pink color. They should not be too dark because that means they’re old.*

1-pound dry pinto beans (2 ½ cups)

6-cups water

1 ½-teaspoon salt

1-Jalapeno with slices to release flavor

¼-cup lard or bacon drippings for flavor

1-clove garlic crushed or teaspoon garlic powder

*Overnight soak:* Sort out rocks and broken beans. Rinse beans to clean in a strainer sitting in a large bowl of water until the water is clean. Add 8 cups cold water. Let stand overnight or at least 6 to 8 hours.

*Cooking Directions*: Add salt and Jalapeno (optional) and bring water to a boil. Simmer gently with lid tilted until desired tenderness is reached. About 2 ½ to 3 hours or until beans are very tender.

*Optional Crockpot Cooking Directions*: (no need to overnight soak, but rinse beans to clean). Cook with at least 3-4 inches of water on top of beans and add salt and jalapeno (optional) for 6 hours on high or if you turn on before you work, cook 8+ hours on low.

Cooking Directions for refried beans: In a large heavy skillet melt lard and toast the jalapeno to bring out flavor until you start smelling the pepper and it’s nice and brown. Add a couple large-spoonful of beans with liquid, garlic powder, and mash ½ of the beans so some are left whole or if desired, you can mash completely. Add remaining beans and repeat. Cook, uncovered, over medium heat about 10 minutes or till thick, stirring often. If desired, remove Jalapeno. Serve as a side dish (some left whole if desired) or use as a filling for Burritos (mashed completely). Makes about 4 ½ cups.

**Taco Carne (Taco Meat)**

Taco meat can be used in enchiladas, tostadas, dips, taco salad, and nachos. Pepper Flakes can be added if desired.

1-pound ground beef

1-medium onion, chopped (1/2 cup) optional

1-clove garlic, minced or tsp. garlic powder

1-teaspoon Maxine chili powder

½-teaspoon Cumin to taste (more or less)

¾-teaspoon salt

In skillet cook beef, onion, and garlic till meat is brown and onion is tender. Drain off fat. Mix the chili powder and salt together and add seasonings to the meat mixture. Stuff each taco shell or tortilla with some of the mixture, tomatoes, lettuce, cheese and the pass salsa. Makes 6 servings.

Toppings:

1-large tomato, chopped

3-cups shredded cheddar cheese

1-cup shredded lettuce

1-medium avocado, seeded, peeled, and cut in 12 wedges

Sour Cream (Crema)

**For Tostadas:** In heavy skillet heat ¼ inch oil. Fry tortillas, one at a time, in hot oil for 20 to 40 seconds on each side or till crisp and golden. Drain on paper toweling. Keep warm in foil in 250o oven. Add meat mixture on top of each tostada with tomatoes, cheese, lettuce, avocado and salsa. You can also add ***Frijoles Refritos***and then add**Taco Carne**on top.

**For soft taco:** Stuff each of the warm tortillas with some of the meat mixture. Fold warm tortillas around mixture with tomatoes, cheese, lettuce, avocado and salsa. You can also add ***Frijoles Refritos***and then add**Taco Carne**on top.

**Burritos (Bean and Cheese Filled Flour Tortillas)**

Burritos are Mexican American Invention. For us anything in a tortilla is considered a taco. If using store bought tortillas, I prefer to warm them on the stove before filling.

12 10-inch flour tortillas

1-large onion chopped as desired

2-tablespoons cooking oil

4-cups Frijoles Refritos or 2 15-ounce cans refried beans

Wrap stack of tortillas tightly in foil; heat in 350o oven for 15 minutes.

Add Frijoles Refritos to skillet; cook and stir till heated through. Spoon the mixture onto each tortilla near one edge. Top with cheese, lettuce, tomato, and avocado wedge. Fold edge nearest filling up and over filling just till mixture is covered. Arrange on baking sheet; bake in 350o oven about 15 minutes or till heated through.

**For beef/bean burritos**

In a large skillet, combine **Taco Carne** and **Frijoles Refritos** mixtures in equal portions. Add 2 tablespoons of mixture into tortillas. (You can also add the *Salsa* directly in to the mixture if desired, It’s Caleb James favorite way to eat them.) Fold tortillas around meat mixture and roll up. Arrange on baking sheet; bake in 350o oven about 15 minutes or till heated through.

Burritos are easy to freeze and thaw. Defrost in microwave for 1 minute. You can heat in microwave, brown in a skillet, or warm in an oven.

**Spanish Rice**

1 ½-cups Long Grain White Rice

¼-cup lard or oil

1-cup chopped onion

1 ½-teaspoon salt

1 ½-teaspoon garlic powder, throw in a clove of garlic for extra flavor

4-oz. tomato paste

4-cups water or chicken broth

Heat oil in a 4-quart saucepan or skillet; add rice and onion and brown. Add salt, garlic, and tomato paste. Add water and bring to a boil. Turn heat down low and cover with a lid. Do not stir and simmer 15 minutes or until all water is absorbed.

**Margarita**

It’s all about a good shake and pour!

Kosher Salt for rim of glass

1 shot Patron Citronge or favorite tequila

½-ounce Grand Marnier

4-ounce Sweet N Sour

2-ounce of orange juice

Add to Shaker and then pour into glass

Garnish with a lime and orange

To make it spicy, add jalapeno juice and muddle jalapeno

Garnish with jalapeno instead of lime and orange