THE RECIPES

First Courses

CAMPECHANA

(Mexican Seafood Cocktail)

SERVES 6–8

This dish is a favorite at Goode Company Seafood in Houston (see "The Guide", page 77). It goes perfectly with fried tortilla chips and cold beer.

- ½ cup fresh lime juice
- ⅓ cup ketchup
- ¼ cup chili sauce, such as Heinz
- ¼ cup chopped cilantro leaves
- ¼ cup chopped green olives
- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- ¼ cup finely chopped white onion
- ¼ cup chopped flat-leaf parsley
- ¼ cup tomato-clam cocktail, such as Clamato
- ¼ cup seeded and chopped fresh tomatoes

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- 1 tbsp. chopped fresh oregano
- 2 tsp. Tabasco
- 2 anaheim chiles, roasted, peeled, seeded, and chopped
- 1 clove garlic, finely chopped
- 1 serrano chile, finely chopped
- Kosher salt, to taste
- ½ lb. cooked and peeled medium shrimp
- ½ lb. jumbo lump crabmeat, picked and cleaned
- 1 avocado, cut into ¼" cubes

Combine the first 15 ingredients in a large bowl and season with salt; toss to mix. Fold in shrimp, crab, and avocado. Serve with tortilla chips.

The following salsas (pictured, clockwise from left: verde, tomato, mango-habanero) earned high honors at the 2008 Austin Chronicle Hot Sauce Festival (see No. 14).

MANGO-HABANERO SALSA

MAKES ABOUT 5 CUPS

Adding the mangoes after puréeing gives this salsa, winner in the "special variety" category, a chunky texture.

- 3 tbsp. canola oil
- 3 cloves garlic, unpeeled
- 3 tomatillos, husked and washed
- 3 tomatoes, cored
- 1 red bell pepper
- 1 yellow bell pepper
- 1 orange habanero chile
- 1 poblano chile
- ½ medium white onion
- ½ cup minced red onion
- ¼ cup chopped cilantro leaves
- ¼ cup fresh lime juice
- 1 large mango, peeled, pitted, and cut into ¼" cubes
- Kosher salt, to taste

❶ Heat oven to broil; place a rack 6" from the heating element. Put the first 9 ingredients into a large bowl and toss. Transfer ingredients to a foil-lined baking sheet; broil, turning a few times, until blistered, 10–12 minutes. Transfer all but the peppers and chiles to a bowl; let cool. Continue broiling peppers and chiles until soft, 3–5 minutes. Let steam in a covered bowl for 15 minutes.

❷ Peel garlic and stem, seed, and peel peppers and chiles; transfer all broiled vegetables to a food processor; process until finely chopped. Transfer salsa to a bowl and stir in red onions, cilantro, lime juice, and mangoes; season with salt.

SALSA VERDE

MAKES 2 ½ CUPS

The recipe for this smooth, spicy salsa—the first-prize winner in the green-sauce category—comes from Marti Cardenas of Austin, Texas.

- 7 jalapeño chiles, stemmed, halved, and seeded
- 7 serrano chiles, stemmed, halved, and seeded
- 7 tomatillos, husked, washed, and halved
- 3 cloves garlic
- 2 plum tomatoes, cored
- 1 anaheim chile, stemmed, halved, and seeded
- 1 poblano chile, stemmed, halved, and seeded
- ½ onion
- ¼ cup finely chopped cilantro
- Kosher salt, to taste

Put first 8 ingredients into a 4-qt. saucepan; add 8 cups water. Bring to a boil; reduce heat to medium-low and simmer until chiles are soft, about 20 minutes. Drain chile mixture and transfer to a food processor; purée. Let cool. Stir in cilantro and season with salt. Chill before serving.

TOMATO SALSA

MAKES 4 ½ CUPS

A version of this fresh salsa took third prize in the red-sauce category.

- 7 cloves garlic
- 2 serrano chiles, stemmed, halved, and seeded
- 1 habanero chile, stemmed, halved, and seeded
- 2 medium beefsteak tomatoes, cored and seeded
- ½ white onion
- 1½ cups canned, drained, and diced fire-roasted tomatoes
- ⅓ cup fresh lime juice
- ¼ cup chopped cilantro leaves
- 3 scallions, thinly sliced
- Kosher salt, to taste

In a food processor, chop garlic and chiles. Add beefsteak tomatoes and onion; pulse until chopped. Add fire-roasted tomatoes, lime juice, cilantro, and scallions; pulse until roughly chopped. Season with salt.

OYSTERS GILHOOLEY

MAKES 12 OYSTERS

The cooks at Gilhooley's in San Leon, Texas, grill their oysters (see No. 8) with parmesan; broiling them works, too. See page 102 for step-by-step oyster-shucking instructions.

- 8 tbsp. unsalted butter, softened
- 1 tbsp. worcestershire
- 1 tbsp. finely chopped garlic
- 1½ tsp. Tabasco
- 12 oysters, shucked, on half shell
- 12 small shrimp, cooked and peeled
- ⅓ cup finely grated parmesan
- Lemon slices, for serving

Heat oven to broil; place a rack 3" from heating element. In a food processor, pulse butter, worcestershire, garlic, and Tabasco until smooth. Arrange oysters on a foil-lined baking sheet. Top each oyster with a shrimp and some of the butter mixture; sprinkle with parmesan. Broil until oysters just curl, about 5 minutes. Serve with lemon slices.

TEXAS CAVIAR

SERVES 6

The legenday Texas cook Helen Corbitt (see page 20) invented this simple, delicious black-eyed pea salad in Austin in 1940.

THE RECIPES

- 2 15-oz. cans black-eyed peas, drained and rinsed
- ¼ cup roughly chopped cilantro
- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- ¼ cup red wine vinegar
- 1 clove garlic, finely chopped
- 1 serrano chile, stemmed, seeded, and finely chopped
- ½ red bell pepper, cored, seeded, and finely chopped
- ¼ red onion, thinly sliced
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

Combine first 8 ingredients in a bowl; season with salt and pepper. Refrigerate for 4 hours or overnight. Serve on top of lettuce leaves.

Main Courses

COWBOY RIB EYE

SERVES 4

This recipe for mesquite-grilled steak with onions rings comes from Dallas chef Stephan Pyles (see No. 17).

- ¼ cup plus 1 tsp. sweet paprika
- 3 tbsp. kosher salt
- 1½ tbsp. ground guajillo chile
- 1½ tbsp. ground pasilla chile
- 1½ tbsp. ground chipotle chile
- 1½ tbsp. sugar
- 4 16-oz. bone-in rib-eye steaks
- Canola oil, for frying
- 1 small yellow onion, cut crosswise into ¼"-thick rings
- 1 cup milk
- 1½ cups flour
- 1 tbsp. chili powder
- 1 tsp. cayenne pepper
- ½ tsp. ground cumin
- ¼ tsp. ground black pepper

❶ In a medium bowl, whisk together ¼ cup paprika, 2 tbsp. salt, guajillo, pasilla, and chipotle chiles, and sugar. Put steaks on a parchment-lined baking sheet; rub with the chile mixture. Refrigerate steaks overnight.

❷ Make onion rings: Pour oil into a 4-qt. saucepan to a depth of 2"; heat over medium-high heat until a deep-fry thermometer reads 350°. Meanwhile, put onions and milk into a bowl; let soak for 20 minutes. In a large bowl, whisk together remaining paprika and salt, flour, chili powder, cayenne, cumin, and pepper. Working in batches, remove onions from the milk, shake off excess, and toss in seasoned flour. Fry onions until crisp, about 3 minutes. Drain on paper towels; season with salt. Set aside.

❸ Build a medium-hot fire with mesquite charcoal or heat a gas grill to medium-high. (Alternatively, heat a medium grill pan over medium-high heat.) Grill steaks, turning once, until medium rare, about 12 minutes. Serve with onion rings.

Pairing Note George Majdalani, the managing partner of the Dallas restaurant Stephan Pyles, recommends the Fall Creek Meritus 2004 ($40), a full-bodied wine made from a blend of Texas-grown merlot, cabernet, and malbec; it's loaded with dark cherry and chocolate flavors and pairs wonderfully with the chile-rubbed steak.

CRAWFISH BOIL

SERVES 2

The crawfish boil (see No. 19) is a Gulf Coast tradition of Cajun origin. For a step-by-step guide to eating crawfish, see page 88.

- 5 lbs. live crawfish (see page 108), rinsed
- 1½ cups kosher salt
- 3 tbsp. paprika
- 2 tbsp. yellow mustard seeds
- 1 tbsp. cayenne pepper
- 1 tbsp. black peppercorns
- 10 bay leaves
- 4 ribs celery, chopped
- 3 heads garlic, halved crosswise
- 2 onions, quartered
- 1 orange, quartered

Fill a large bowl with salted water; soak crawfish for 15 minutes. Meanwhile, add remaining ingredients to a 10-qt. stockpot with 6 quarts of water; bring to a boil. Boil for 30 minutes to infuse broth. Add crawfish; cook until bright red and cooked through, about 8 minutes.

RED CHILE ENCHILADAS

SERVES 6

The González family in Las Cruces, near El Paso (see No. 7), makes enchiladas similar to these using an old family recipe.

- 20 dried new mexico chiles (see page 108)
- 3 tbsp. canola oil, plus more for frying
- 10 cloves garlic
- ¼ cup fresh lime juice
- 1 tbsp. ground cumin
- 2 tsp. sugar
- Kosher salt, to taste
- 12 corn tortillas
- 2 cups grated mozzarella
- 2 cups grated sharp cheddar
- ¾ cup finely chopped red onion
- ¼ cup finely crumbled cotija cheese
- 3 tbsp. crema or sour cream

❶ Soften chiles (see "How to Soak Chiles", page 84). Transfer chiles and 2 cups soaking water to a food processor; let cool.

❷ Heat oven to 450°. Heat oil in a 12" skillet over medium heat. Add garlic; cook until golden brown, about 2 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer garlic to the food processor with the reserved chiles, reserving oil in skillet. Purée chile-garlic mixture; add lime, cumin, sugar, and salt and pulse to combine. Strain through a sieve; discard solids. Transfer chile sauce to reserved skillet; heat sauce over medium heat.

❸ Pour oil into a 10" skillet over medium-high heat to a depth of ½". Using tongs and working with one tortilla at a time, dip tortilla in oil; cook until slightly crisp, about 15 seconds. Drain tortilla. Dip in chile sauce to coat, and transfer to a plate. Sprinkle some of the mozzarella, cheddar, and onions along center of tortilla. Roll up enchilada. Arrange rolled enchiladas on a baking sheet; bake until cheese is melted, about 5 minutes. Divide enchiladas between 4 plates; sprinkle with cotija cheese and drizzle with crema.

Pairing Note Michael Flynn, the wine director at the Rosewood Mansion on Turtle Creek, in Dallas, recommends a dry rosé for these enchiladas. The McPherson Cellars grenache-syrah Rosé 2008 ($10) has a crisp acidity and a pronounced fruit flavor that complements the chile sauce's heat.

MASA HARINA

Cooks in Texas often add finely shredded corn tortillas to soups and stews while they cook; as the tortillas dissolve, they add thickness and the subtly nutty taste of ground-corn masa, the dough used for making tortillas. You can achieve a similar effect by using masa harina instead. Available at Latin American markets, masa harina is the powdered form of fresh corn masa. Adding it (instead of standard cornstarch) to dishes like the chili on page 86 at the end of cooking will not only thicken the stew beautifully but also lend a delicious hint of masa flavor. —*Ben Mims*

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: ANDRÉ BARANOWSKI; PENNY DE LOS SANTOS; TODD COLEMAN; LANDON NORDEMAN