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STUFF AND BAKE CHILES: Put oven rack in middle position and preheat oven to 350°F. ▸Cut a lengthwise slit in each chile and carefully cut out seeds with kitchen shears, leaving stem intact. (For milder heat, carefully cut out ribs also.) ▸Divide pork filling among chiles, then close, overlapping sides of openings slightly. Transfer, seam sides up, to a 13- by 9-inch shallow baking dish, then cover with foil and bake until just heated through, 15 to 25 minutes. ▸Transfer chiles to plates, carefully turning them seam sides down. Pour about ⅓ cup walnut sauce over each chile, leaving some of chile visible, then sprinkle chiles with pomegranate seeds. Serve chiles warm or at room temperature.

COOKS' NOTES: Pork can be cooked 1 day ahead. Cool in broth, uncovered, then chill in broth, covered.

• Sauce can be made 1 day ahead and chilled, covered. Bring to room temperature before serving.

• Chiles can be roasted 1 day ahead. Chill, covered, then pat dry before filling.

GREEN-CHILE BEEF STEW

SERVES 6

ACTIVE TIME: 1 HR (INCLUDES ROASTING CHILES)

START TO FINISH: 4 HR

This stew has "family favorite" written all over it. The simplicity of the ingredients, along with its versatility, add up to a dish that is fabulous for a casual dinner at home or to serve to guests.

- **3 lb boneless beef chuck, trimmed and cut into 1½-inch pieces**
- **½ teaspoon black pepper**
- **2 teaspoons salt**
- **2 tablespoons vegetable oil**
- **2 large white onions, chopped (4 to 5 cups)**
- **3 garlic cloves, finely chopped (about 1 tablespoon)**
- **1 tablespoon ground cumin**
- **1 (28-oz) can whole tomatoes in juice**
- **2 to 2½ cups water**
- **1 lb fresh New Mexico green chiles or Anaheim chiles (8 to 10), roasted and peeled (this page)**

ACCOMPANIMENTS: cooked pinto beans and rice

▸Pat beef dry and season with pepper and 1 teaspoon salt. ▸Heat oil in a 10- to 11-inch heavy pot (5- to 7-quart) over moderately high heat until hot but not smoking, then brown beef in batches, turning occasionally, until browned, 6 to 8 minutes per batch. Transfer as browned to a bowl using a slotted spoon. ▸Add onion and garlic to fat in pot and cook over moderately high heat, stirring and scraping up brown bits, until softened, about 8 minutes. Add cumin and remaining teaspoon salt and cook, stirring, 2 minutes. Return beef (with any juices accumulated in bowl) to pot and stir in tomatoes with juice and enough water to cover meat, then bring to a simmer. ▸Discard seeds, ribs, and stems from chiles, then cut lengthwise into ⅓-inch-wide strips. Add chiles to stew and gently simmer, uncovered, stirring occasionally to break up tomatoes, until meat is very tender, about 3 hours.

COOKS' NOTE: Stew is best made 1 day ahead to allow flavors to develop. Cool completely, uncovered, then chill, covered. Reheat before serving.

TO ROAST AND PEEL LARGE FRESH CHILES:

Lay chiles on their sides on racks of gas burners, 1 or 2 chiles per burner, then turn flames on moderately high. Alternatively, put chiles on rack of a broiler pan 2 inches from heat. Roast chiles, turning frequently with tongs, until skins are blistered and lightly charred all over, 4 to 6 minutes (6 to 8 minutes if broiling). Transfer chiles immediately to a large bowl, then cover with a plate. Steam 20 minutes, then peel or rub off skin.

PASTRY DOUGH

MAKES ENOUGH DOUGH FOR 1 SINGLE-CRUST 9-INCH PIE OR 1 (9- TO 11-INCH) TART

ACTIVE TIME: 10 MIN START TO FINISH: 1¼ HR

- **1¼ cups all-purpose flour**
- **¾ stick (6 tablespoons) cold unsalted butter, cut into ½-inch cubes**
- **2 tablespoons cold vegetable shortening (preferably trans-fat-free)**
- **¼ teaspoon salt**
- **3 to 4 tablespoons ice water**

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: a pastry or bench scraper

▸Blend together flour, butter, shortening, and salt in a bowl with your fingertips or a pastry blender (or pulse in a food processor) just until most of mixture resembles coarse meal with some small (roughly pea-sized) butter lumps. ▸Drizzle 3 tablespoons ice water over mixture and toss with a fork until incorporated. ▸Squeeze a small handful: If it doesn't hold together, add more ice water, ½ tablespoon at a time, stirring (or pulsing) until incorporated, then test again. (If you overwork mixture, pastry will be tough.) ▸Turn out mixture onto a lightly floured surface and divide into 4 portions. With heel of your hand, smear each portion once or twice in a forward motion to help distribute fat. Gather dough together with scraper and press into a ball, then flatten into a 5-inch disk. Chill, wrapped in plastic wrap, until firm, at least 1 hour.

(Continued from page 30) level of the huevos rancheros, then inquire if we want ours "*muy caliente*."

"*Sí*," say we, and as the eggs fry, a waitress brings out a plastic cup filled with salsa, along with a couple of warm-from-the-griddle flour tortillas, each folded into quarters. The salsa is olive green, chopped fine. It is made of jalapeño peppers—*muy caliente*, indeed!—and has a smoky zest that plays reveille on the tongue.

Amused by the tears of hot-pepper joy in our eyes, the waitress turns to a cabinet and fetches a plastic bottle. She carries it toward the counter as cautiously as a pyrotechnician toting pure nitroglycerin. She sets the bottle, filled with house-made pink salsa, before us and whispers with conspiratorial glee, "¡*Más caliente*!"

We squeeze some onto a tortilla and taste. "Calientissimo!" we exclaim, emboldened by our pepper-induced rapture to speak our own brand of pidgin Spanish. It is blazing hot, but totally different from the jalapeño salsa or the peppers on the eggs: more inferno and less intrigue. When we ask what kind of chiles are used to make it, one of the explosives experts behind the counter explains, but her Spanish is lost on us. A coffee hound a few stools down translates: "Chiles from trees—*chiles de árbol*."

We were wearing ten-gallon hats, so we soon became known to one and all as the cowboys. "*Vaqueros*," called the waitress as we headed out the door, "*vaya con Dios*." With the car radio tuned to the rollicking Mexican polka rhythms of Tejano music, we highballed north along the river. From "Along the