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Creative Entertaining: Backyard Mexican Fiesta, with Recipes!

Posted by: Rana Florida, Fri, Jun 08 2012



By: Rana Florida



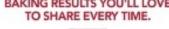
Everyone loves tacos! From food trucks to gourmet eateries, this Mexican street snack is all the rage. So why not turn a traditional backyard bbg into a fun and flavourful authentic Mexican grill?

This evening begins by welcoming guests with cool and tangy margaritas. Chunky guacamole with organic chips for dipping is the perfect appetizer. Then, guests can step up to a make-it-yourself seafood taco bar with fresh salsa and spicy rice. For dessert, indulge in warm cinnamon churros oozing with sugary sweetness or a refreshing mango, kiwi, and pineapple salad with mint and granadilla. For the kids, Mexican adorned vanilla and chocolate mini cupcakes. Heat up your grills for this modern day fiesta! See the Party Planner on HGTV.ca!



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All recipes by Chef Jason Smidt of Jay Exclusive Caterers

MENU



Starter

Guacamole with organic pita chips

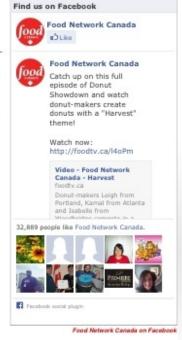
Taco Bar

Fish & shrimp taco bar
Fresh corn tacos
Chili, lime marinated grouper and shrimp
Pickled red and white cabbage
Sour cream
Cilantro
Black beans
Pureed tomato salsa



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Add your favorite margarita mix, the juice from a quarter lime, good quality Tequila, and a splash of Triple Sec to the blender, along with a few ice cubes. Mix a bit of your best coarse salt flakes with regular Kosher salt and rim your glass. Whizz your Margarita in the blender until nice and frothy, pour into the glass and add a lime disk garnish. For Virgin version, same recipe but hold the alcohol.

Guacamole with organic pita chips



Ingredients

- · 4 ripe avocados
- ½ vine tomato, seeded and diced
- 1/2 Jalapeno pepper, finely diced
- · 1/4 Vidalia onion, finely diced
- 1 zest and juice of a large lime (or more to taste)
- 1/4 cup coarsely chopped cilantro leaves
- · Salt and pepper

Directions

Half and pit the avocados, scoop flesh out with a spoon into a medium sized mixing bowl. Add tomato, Jalapeno, onion, lime zest and juice, and cilantro. Roughly break up the avocado with a spoon, combining all ingredients. Season with salt and pepper. Enjoy with your favorite organic pita chips.

Fish & shrimp tacos



Ingredients Seafood

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- · 1 pound white flaky fish, such as Grouper or mahi mahi
- · 1 pound peeled and de-veined jumbo shrimp
- · 1/4 cup canola oil
- · 1 lime, zested and juiced
- · 1 tablespoon Ancho chili powder
- 1/2 Jalapeno pepper, coarsely chopped
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh cilantro leaves
- · 8 flour tortillas

Directions

Place fish and peeled shrimp in a medium size dish. Whisk together the oil, lime juice, Ancho powder, Jalapeno and cilantro, and pour over the fish and shrimp. Marinate for 15 to 20 minutes.

Remove the fish from the marinade, lightly salt both sides. Place on a hot grill, flesh side down. Grill the fish for 4 minutes and the shrimp for 2 minutes on the first side and then flip for 30 seconds and remove. Let the fish rest for 5 minutes then flake off the flesh with a fork. Place the tortillas on the grill and grill for 20 seconds. Divide the fish among the tortillas and garnish with any or all of the garnishes.

Pureed tomato salsa



Ingredients

- · 2 tablespoons peanut oil
- · 1 small red onion, coarsely chopped
- · 4 cloves garlic, coarsely chopped
- · 4 large ripe tomatoes, chopped
- · 1 Serrano chili
- 1 Jalapeno pepper, sliced
- 1 tablespoon dried Mexican oregano
- · 1/4 cup chopped fresh cilantro leaves
- · 2 large limes, zested and juiced
- · Salt and pepper

Directions

Preheat grill or use side burners of the grill. Heat oil in medium saucepan, add onions and garlic and cook until soft. Add tomatoes, Serrano and Jalapeno and cook until tomatoes are soft, about 15 to 20 minutes. Puree the mixture with a hand-held immersion blender until smooth and cook for an additional 10 to 15 minutes. Add the oregano, cilantro, lime zest and juice and season with salt and pepper to taste.

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Shredded red & white cabbage

Ingredients

- 1/4 red cabbage thinly sliced
- · 1/4 white cabbage thinly sliced

Note: Keep cabbages separate or the color of the red cabbage will run (or prepare just one color cabbage)

- 1/2 cup white vinegar
- · 2 tablespoons sugar
- · Pinch red pepper flakes
- · 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- · 1 large dried bay leaf

Directions

Combine vinegar, sugar, red pepper flakes, bay leaf and salt in a small saucepan. Heat over a medium flame until sugar dissolves. Remove from heat and pour over your thinly sliced cabbage. Toss and let rest. When mixture is at room temperature toss one more time, put in an airtight container, and refrigerate until ready to use.

Other garnishes

Tin of black beans lightly rinsed Hot sauce Sour cream Diced tomatoes Thinly sliced green onion Chopped cilantro leaves

Dirty Mexican rice with assorted vegetables and black beans





Ingredients

- · 1 cup cooked long grain brown rice
- · 1 large carrot finely diced
- · 4 celery stalks finely diced
- · 1 cup peas
- · 2 corn on the cob, grilled and shucked
- · 1 large red onion, finely diced
- · 2 large garlic cloves, coarsely chopped
- · 1 cup lightly rinsed tin of black beans
- 1 cinnamon stick
- · 1 bay leaf
- · 4 tablespoons Mexican chili powder
- · 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 tablespoon butter
- · Salt and pepper

Directions

Place a large saucepan on high heat, add the olive oil and butter, add all vegetables except black beans, bay leaf and cinnamon stick, and pan fry on high 3-5 minutes. Turn heat down to med-high, add bay leaf, cinnamon stick and chili powder and fry for an additional 5-8 minutes. Add rice to pan and mix in with vegetables. Add black beans and salt and pepper to taste.

Sautéed peppers & Onions

Ingredients

- · 1 large red onion sliced
- · 1 large Vidalia onion sliced
- 1 red, 1 yellow, 1 green bell pepper, halved, seeded, and sliced
- · 1 large garlic clove, coarsely chopped
- · 2 tablespoons Mexican chili powder
- · 2 tablespoons olive oil

Directions

Place a pan on high heat, add olive oil before pan smokes, add onions and peppers and begin to pan fry, tossing onions frequently. Once vegetables start to change color add the garlic and chili powder and toss for two more minutes. Season with salt and pepper and serve.

Churros sprinkled with cinnamon sugar



Ingredients

- · 1 cup water
- · 2 1/2 tablespoons white sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- · 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- · 2 quarts oil for frying
- · 1/2 cup white sugar, or to taste
- · 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

Directions

In a small saucepan over medium heat, combine water, 2 1/2 tablespoons sugar, salt, and 2 tablespoons vegetable oil. Bring to a boil and remove from heat. Stir in flour until mixture forms a ball.

Heat oil for frying in deep-fryer or deep skillet to 375 degrees F (190 degrees C). Using a pastry bag, pipe strips of dough into hot oil. Fry until golden; drain on paper towels.

Combine 1/2 cup sugar and cinnamon and roll drained churros in mixture. Serve.

Mango, kiwi and pineapple salad with mint & granadilla

Ingredients

- · 1/2 pineapple, peeled, cored, and cut into chunks
- · 4 kiwi fruits, peeled and cut into quarters
- · 2 mangoes peeled, flesh cut into chunks
- ½ cup mint leaves
- · 4 granadilla halved with fruit scooped out
- · Raspberries if desired

Directions

Place fruit in a bowl and mix together with mint.

Cupcakes by Eat My Words

Vanilla and chocolate mini cupcakes adorned with Mexican themed decorations, such as sombreros, chili peppers, and cactus.

> Rana Florida is the writer and editor of the HGTV series Creative Spaces. Rana is a lifestyle columnist and has over two decades of experience in corporate strategy, marketing and branding for Fortune 100 companies. She is the

CEO of the Creative Class Group, whose client list includes BMW, Microsoft, IBM, Zappos, Starwood, Philips, Nomura Financial Securities, Emaar Properties and Johnson & Johnson. Follow Rana on Twitter @ranaflorida.

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