

These recipes make light Mexican dishes with flavor

Salsas may be the best low-fat dip around, and low-fat, protein-rich beans are surging in popularity. But face it, most of the Mexican dishes we love—the nachos, enchiladas and chiles rellenos—are high in fat. Fortunately, creative cooks can make Mexican favorites with leaner ingredients and fat-trimming techniques without sacrificing authentic Mexican flavor.

Make a savory gazpacho with eight tomatoes, a cucumber, red onion, bell pepper, two ribs of celery and five jalapeno peppers (seeded). Cut the vegetables in chunks and pulse in a food processor until finely chopped. Combine them with 4 cups of tomato juice, 3 tablespoons fresh lime juice, 2 tablespoons red wine vinegar and 1 1/2 teaspoon salt.

Mix, cover and refrigerate until thoroughly chilled. Serve topped with a dollop of low-fat, plain yogurt.

Fill tacos with spicy flaked fish and salsa. Cut a pound of white fish fillets into pieces and simmer in two cups chicken broth seasoned with 2 tablespoons juice from pickled jalapeno peppers for 3 to 4 minutes. Remove from the heat and let the fish cook in the liquid for 30 minutes. Remove the fish and pat dry with paper towels, then flake with a fork.

In a bowl, toss the fish with 1/4 cup thinly sliced scallions and one finely diced tomato, and season with salt and pepper. Fill each taco with fish mixture and shredded lettuce, then top with a tablespoon of your favorite mild salsa.

Mexican corn relish is really a cooked salad. Sauté one diced white onion in a tablespoon of canola oil, stirring occasionally. Add two cups of corn and cook until tender, three to five minutes, then transfer to a medium-size bowl. Add one diced red bell pepper, 1/3 cup diced poblano chile or green pepper, 2 tablespoons of chopped cilantro, 1 1/2 tablespoons of fresh lime juice or white wine vinegar and a 1/2 teaspoon of salt. Mix well and serve at room temperature.

Jiffy Mexican Burritos are so simple that even kids can make them.

JIFFY MEXICAN BURRITOS
1 can (16 oz) fat-free refried beans
1/3 cup salsa or water
4 (9-inch) soft flour tortillas
1 medium tomato, chopped
4 small green onions, chopped
1/2 green pepper, chopped
1 cup reduced-fat shredded

mozzarella cheese
Shredded lettuce
Salsa or taco sauce, as desired
Low-fat sour cream or low-fat plain yogurt (optional)

Combine beans and salsa or water; mix well. Spread about 1/3 cup of the bean mixture thinly over each tortilla, leaving a 1-inch border. Sprinkle tomato, green onions, green pepper and half the cheese over tortillas.

Roll each tortilla and place, seam side down, in a lightly greased baking dish. Bake in a 400 degree F. oven for 10 minutes. Sprinkle with remaining cheese; bake for 5 minutes longer or until heated through and cheese melts. (Or cover with waxed paper and microwave on medium-high (70%) power for 2 to 4 minutes or until heated through).

Serve burritos on shredded lettuce. Pass salsa or taco sauce and sour cream or yogurt separately.

Each of the 4 servings contains 323 calories and 7 grams of fat.
Recipe from the American Institute for Cancer Research.



AMERICAN INSTITUTE FOR CANCER RESEARCH

Jiffy Burritos: Roll up fat-free refried beans, cheese and salsa to make these quick Mexican Burritos.

Cake is comforting food that has made a comeback

Cake holds the distinction of comeback food of the year. On an emotional level, Gale Gand, owner of Chicago's acclaimed Brasserie T restaurant, credits baby boomers' affinity for "comfort food" with cakes recent resurgence on the dessert menu.

This Coconut Oatmeal Cake, showcased by Gand at the International Association of Culinary Professionals Conference on April 26, is a recipe for those seeking adventuresome taste.

COCONUT OATMEAL CAKE
Cake:
1 cup rolled oats

1 1/4 cups boiling water
1/2 cup or (1 stick) butter, softened
1 cup packed light brown sugar
1/2 cup granulated sugar
2 eggs
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
Topping:
6 tablespoons butter, soft-

ened
2/3 cup packed light brown sugar
1/4 cup half and half
2/3 cup chopped pecans or walnuts
1 cup flaked coconut
Heat oven to 350 degrees F. and butter a 13 by 9 by 2-inch baking pan.

Place oats in medium bowl. Add boiling water; let stand for 20 minutes and drain off water. Sift together the all-purpose flour, baking soda, salt, ground cinnamon,

and nutmeg and reserve.

Mix butter and both sugars until light and creamy, about four minutes. Add eggs and vanilla. Beat until creamy, about one minute. Beat in rolled oats and sifted dry

ingredients until well mixed.

Spread batter evenly in the prepared pan. Bake until wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean, 25 to 30 minutes. Remove cake from oven and cook in cake pan.

For topping: mix butter and sugar until light and creamy, about 4 minutes. Stir in remaining ingredients. Spread on cake. Broil in oven until golden brown, about 1 minute. Serves 12.

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