

THE DELECTABLE ACCENTS OF MEXICO

For many culinary explorers, one of the most delightful menu discoveries in recent years is the varied and tantalizing tastes of Mexico.

Over the centuries, Mexican cookery has become a rich tapestry of cuisines, deliciously woven from Aztec, Mayan and other native foods mingled with those of Spain and other lands. It is difficult to believe the foundation of the Mexican kitchen — corn, tomatoes, chilies and beans — was unknown outside the Americas before the arrival of Cortez in 1519.

Travelling through Mexico, the conquistadores discovered many new and wondrous foods that have become staples of our culinary world — pineapple, chocolate, peanuts, squash, vanilla, sweet potatoes, papayas and avocados.

While the explorers were more interested in conquest than cooking, they recorded their gustatory discoveries with surprise and pleasure. It is interesting to note that early Old World visitors to Mexico saw versions of tacos, tamales and tortillas offered for sale in the markets, much as they are today.

The savory, economical recipes on this page are adapted from favorite dishes enjoyed by our Mexican neighbors. An important accent in each dish is the sweet tangy flavor of canned pineapple, a naturally compatible ingredient with a great variety of Mexican food.

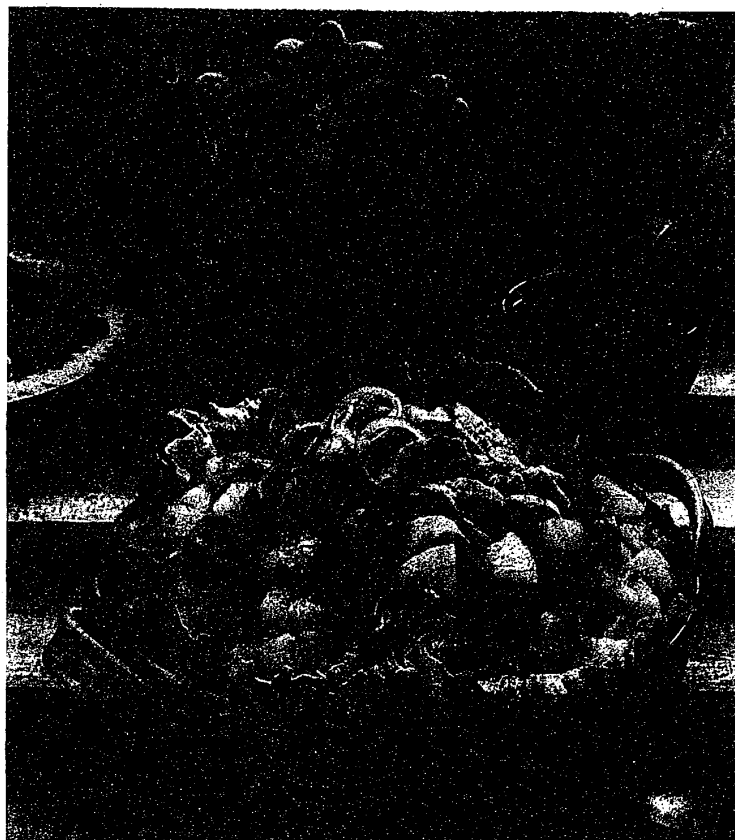
Serve these easily prepared dishes all at one time for a gala "Hawaiian Fiesta," or individually with other foods. However you present them, wish your guests "good eating" and **buen provecho!**

HAWAIIAN TOSTADA

A knife-and-fork, open-face sandwich, this Mexican favorite is a well balanced meal in itself. A nourishing combination of tastes and textures, "Hawaiian Tostada" is a savory way to make beef go further. Prepare a lot. Youngsters love them and everyone will ask for seconds.

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| 3/4 pound ground beef | 3/4 teaspoon salt |
| 2 tablespoons oil | 4 corn tortillas |
| 1/2 cup chopped onion | 1 (8-1/4 oz.) can sliced pineapple, drained |
| 2 tablespoons chopped green pepper | 4 cups shredded iceberg lettuce |
| 1 clove garlic, minced | 1 cup shredded Jack cheese |
| 1 tablespoon chili powder | 1/4 cup dairy sour cream |
| 1 (8 ounce) can tomato sauce | |

Brown beef in 1 tablespoon oil in large heavy skillet. Drain off excess fat. Add onion, green pepper and garlic to skillet, and sauté until tender. Stir in chili powder, tomato sauce and salt, and heat. Fry tortillas in remaining tablespoon oil until crisp; drain and keep warm. Add well drained pineapple slices to skillet, and sauté until heated and tinged with brown. To assemble, place 1/4 cup beef mixture on each tortilla, and cover with 1/2 cup lettuce. Repeat layers. Top each stack with a slice of pineapple, 1/4 cup cheese and a tablespoon sour cream. Serve at once. Makes 4 servings.



CHICKEN SALAD AZTECA

This full-flavored entree salad, with its accents of fresh vegetables and canned pineapple chunks, is an especially appealing way to stretch left-over chicken. Ideal for warm weather, this economical salad is equally good on chilly days served with a bowl of steaming soup.

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| 1 (7 ounce) can green chili salsa (2/3 cup) | 1/3 cup chopped green pepper |
| 1/2 teaspoon Mexican seasoning or chili powder | 2 tablespoons finely chopped parsley |
| 2 tablespoons oil | 1-1/2 quarts shredded iceberg lettuce |
| 2 tablespoons red wine vinegar | 2 medium size tomatoes |
| 2 cups cooked chicken strips | 1/2 cup small rings sweet red onion |
| Salsa Dressing | * 1/2 cup pitted ripe olives |
| 1 (1 pound 4 ounce) can pineapple chunks | |
| 1 cup sliced celery | |

Measure out 2 tablespoons green chili salsa and mix with Mexican seasoning or chili powder, oil and vinegar (save remaining salsa for dressing). Toss mixture with chicken, cover and refrigerate. Prepare Salsa Dressing: chill pineapple. When ready to serve, toss chicken with celery, green pepper and parsley. Line a chilled serving bowl with a few crisp lettuce leaves. Add shredded lettuce and arrange chicken mixture, drained pineapple, tomatoes, onion rings and olives on top. Serve with Salsa Dressing. Makes 5 or 6 servings.

Salsa Dressing: Combine remaining green chili salsa with 1/3 cup each oil and red wine vinegar, 1/4 cup syrup from pineapple, 1/2 teaspoon each Mexican seasoning or chili powder and garlic salt. 1 tablespoon finely chopped parsley. Mix well. Makes about 1-1/2 cups.

PINEAPPLE TORTA BORRACHA ("Tipsy Torte")

This easy variation of the popular baba, drenched with a yummy pineapple-rum-orange syrup, may be made the night or morning before you plan to use it. If made ahead, heat briefly before serving. Accompany with MEXICAN COFFEE.

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 2 (8-1/4 oz.) cans crushed pineapple* | 2-3/4 cups sifted all-purpose flour |
| 3/4 cup sugar | 1 teaspoon grated orange peel |
| 1/2 cup milk | 1/2 teaspoon salt |
| 1 envelope active dry yeast | 1/2 cup soft or melted butter |
| 3 tablespoons warm water | Rum Syrup |
| 2 large eggs, beaten | Orange Cream |

Combine pineapple with 1/2 cup sugar, and boil until syrup is reduced to about 1 tablespoon, stirring frequently toward end of cooking to prevent scorching. Set aside to cool. Heat milk to scalding; cool to lukewarm. Soften yeast in warm water; let stand 5 minutes. Add cooled milk, eggs, remaining 1/4 cup sugar and 1 cup flour, and mix smooth. Set aside 1/4 cup pineapple for Rum Syrup. Stir remainder into yeast mixture, then stir in a second cup flour, mixing well. Cover and set in warm place until batter is doubled, 30 to 45 minutes. Stir down. Add orange peel and salt, then remaining 3/4 cup flour alternately with butter, beating well. Spoon into well greased 10-cup mold with tube center. Cover, and let rise until doubled, about 1 hour. Bake below center of moderate oven (350 degrees F) 50 to 55 minutes, until cake tester inserted in center comes out clean. Meanwhile, prepare Rum Syrup. Turn cake out onto serving plate, and let stand 15 minutes. Prick all over with slender skewer or cake tester. Slowly spoon Rum Syrup over, allowing first portion to be absorbed before adding more. Let stand until cool. At serving time, cut into wedges and serve with Orange Cream. Makes 10 servings.

Rum Syrup: Combine a 6-oz. can unsweetened pineapple juice, 2/3 cup sugar and a 4-inch stick cinnamon in small saucepan. Stir over moderate heat until sugar dissolves. Boil 10 minutes. Let stand until cold. Remove cinnamon. Add the reserved 1/4 cup pineapple, 1/2 cup amber rum and 1 teaspoon grated orange peel. Makes about 1-3/4 cups.

Orange Cream: Beat 1-1/2 cups whipping cream with 1-1/2 tablespoons sugar and 1 teaspoon vanilla to soft peaks. Fold in 1-1/2 teaspoons grated orange peel. Makes about 3 cups; sufficient for 10 servings and topping for Mexican coffee.

*Or, 1 (15-1/2 oz.) can crushed pineapple.

MEXICAN COFFEE

Heat 4 cups (1 quart) strong black coffee with 1 teaspoon cinnamon; sweeten to taste. Pour into small dessert cups, and top each with a generous spoonful of the Orange Cream served with the Pineapple Torta Borracha. (Or, beat 1/2 cup whipping cream to soft peaks with 1/16 teaspoon each nutmeg and cinnamon. Sweeten, if desired.) Sprinkle each serving lightly with cinnamon, and serve with a cinnamon stick for stirring. Makes 8 servings.

