

Tex-Mex chicken turns up the heat

San Antonio Chicken with Picante Black Bean Sauce, a fuss-free main dish with spicy Tex-Mex flavors, has taken top honors — and the \$3,000 Grand Prize — in the 1992 Pace Picante Sauce "Pick Up The Pace" Recipe Contest. The contest, an annual round-up of original recipes prepared with Pace Picante Sauce, inspired a wealth of creative entries from spicy food fans nationwide.

Crowd pleasing and quick to fix, the prize-winning main dish simmers boneless, skinless chicken breasts in a boldly seasoned mix of black beans, bell peppers and corn, and takes its garden-fresh flavor and spicy jalapeno heat from mild, medium or hot picante sauce.

A last-minute sprinkling of cilantro completes the recipe, and a simple salad and corn bread or tortillas turn it into a fast fiesta. Charlene Margerson, a computer aide from Brentwood, Calif., is the proud creator of best-of-contest recipe.

Mexican, Tex-Mex and Italian flavors predominated, especially in pizzas, pasta dishes and chili. In fact, so many creative chili recipes were entered that plans for next year's contest include a separate category just for chili lovers.

SAN ANTONIO CHICKEN WITH PICANTE BLACK BEAN SAUCE

6 chicken breast halves, boned and skinned
2 teaspoons ground cumin
1 teaspoon garlic salt
1 Tablespoon vegetable oil
1 cup rinsed and drained canned black beans
1 can (8 ounces) whole kernel corn, drained
½ cup Pace Picante Sauce
½ cup diced red bell pepper
2 Tablespoons chopped cilantro
Sprinkle both sides of chicken with 1 teaspoon of the cumin and the garlic salt. Heat oil in 12-inch skillet over medium-high heat. Add chicken; cook 3 minutes. In medium bowl, combine beans, corn, Pace Picante Sauce, red pepper and remaining 1 teaspoon cumin. Turn chicken; spoon bean mixture evenly over chicken.

Reduce heat to medium; cook uncovered 6-7 minutes or until chicken is cooked through. Push bean mixture off chicken into skillet. Transfer chicken to serving platter, using a slotted spoon; keep warm. Cook bean mixture over high heat 2-3 minutes or until thickened, stirring frequently; spoon over chicken. Sprinkle with cilantro and serve with additional picante sauce. Makes 6 servings.



Tex-Mex chicken: San Antonio Chicken with Picante Black Bean Sauce simmers boneless, skinless chicken breasts in a mix of black beans, corn, bright bell peppers and picante sauce.

Entries in this year's recipe contest revealed that creative cooks are really using the old bean. Canned beans and dried beans, often in combinations of two, three or more, were some of the most frequently incorporated ingredients across all recipe contest categories.

No-fail tips help put frosting on the cake

AP — Frosting makes the cake, or so the saying goes. Yet it's a step that many bakers avoid because they think frosting is difficult or too time-consuming.

Besides adding flair and flavor, frosting a cake takes only minutes to do, especially when you have a pastry brush, a metal spatula and these no-fail frosting tips in hand: Completely cool your cake before decorating.

Use a pastry brush or your hand to brush loose crumbs from the sides of each layer. This keeps crumbs from mixing with the frosting as you spread it.

Before you position a cake layer on a cake platter, arrange strips of waxed paper around the edge of the platter to keep it clean.

Position the first cake layer, top side down, on the waxed paper-edged plate. If the cake layer is too rounded on the top side, it will not sit securely with the top side down. To steady the cake and make it level, use a long-bladed serrated knife to slice a thin piece from the top.

Using a small metal spatula, spread about one-fourth of the frosting over the first layer. Or spread some filling over the cake layer, if you prefer.

When using a firm frosting, such as fudge or butter frosting, spread it to the edge of the cake. When using a soft, fluffy frosting,

leave about 1½ inch unfrosted around the edge. The weight of the second layer will cause the frosting to flow to the edge.

Place the second cake layer, top side up, over the frosted layer so the edges of the layers align. This method of assembling the two layers gives the finished cake a slightly rounded top and avoids the space that results when you position the second layer top side down. If the cake top is too rounded or lopsided, use a sharp, long-bladed knife to level it by slicing off a piece.

Spread the sides of the cake with a thin coat of frosting. This thin layer seals in any crumbs that may still remain. For even spreading, hold the spatula vertically.

Use about two-thirds of the remaining frosting to spread a thicker layer over this thin coat on the sides, making decorative swirls.

Spread the remaining frosting over the top of the cake, joining the frosted sides at the edge. Swirl the frosting with a spatula.

Carefully remove the waxed paper strips.

To serve, cut the cake into wedges with a sharp, thin-bladed knife, slicing with an up-and-down motion, and pulling the knife toward you.

To prevent fluffy frosting from sticking to the knife, dip the knife into hot water between cuts.

Prize-winning area chefs offer delicious apple recipes



KEELY WYGNONIK

Silvana Caparacio, manager of Pure 'n Simple Vegetarian Restaurant in Troy, proved once again, that healthy food doesn't have to taste bland at the Hudson's Fall Marketplace Fair held at Oakland and Twelve Oaks Mall Sept. 14-17. At the last fall, Caparacio won a prize for her banana cream pie.

"I try to make food pure and simple the way nature created it," she said. "That's my life, to show people there's a better way to eat."

Another winning apple recipe, Hudson Valley Grilled Chicken with Macintosh Relish was prepared by Chef William Collins of

the Sheraton Oaks Hotel in Novi. This colorful, festive dish is perfect for Sunday dinners.

Happy New Year to all of our Jewish readers who will be celebrating Rosh Hashanah this week.

During the celebration, Jews reflect on the past year, making amends for past wrongs, and look forward to the new year. It's a solemn occasion marked by self-appraisal.

It is customary to have something sweet and avoid anything sour at the Rosh Hashanah meal because of the ancient belief that what one ate determined what the year ahead would hold.

APPLE-APRICOT FINESSE

Pe filling
6 cups apples, peeled & chopped

¾ cups dried apricots, thinly sliced or snipped
2 Tablespoons raisins
1 teaspoon almond extract
1 cup rice syrup
¼ cup freshly squeezed orange juice
1 Tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon corn starch
½ teaspoon ground cardamom
½ teaspoon ground cardamom
½ cup almonds
½ cup walnuts (chopped)
¼ cup cashew pieces
¼ cup sunflower seeds
2 Tablespoons sesame seeds
¼ teaspoon cinnamon
1 Tablespoon corn oil
2 Tablespoon maple syrup
2 Tablespoon barley malt

Combine the apricots, orange juice and almond extract. Let stand

for 30 minutes. Stirring occasionally, add the apples, raisins, rice syrup and spices. Spoon mixture into an unbaked, whole wheat pie crust (bottom only).

To prepare topping, combine nuts, seeds and cinnamon. Add corn oil, syrup, and malt. Mix all together and place on top of the pie. Cover with foil to avoid burning.

Bake at 375 degrees for 30 minutes. Next, reduce heat to 350 degrees and bake for 30 minutes more. Finally, remove the foil and bake 15 minutes longer. Let cool on a rack. Submitted by Silvana Caparacio, manager Pure 'n Simple

Hudson Valley Grilled Chicken With Macintosh Relish

2 quarts apple juice
6 lemons, cut in half, squeeze

In marinade, add entire

lemon

1 bunch parsley stems, chopped

3 Tablespoons garlic, chopped

1 Tablespoon fresh ginger, chopped

2 cups soy sauce

½ teaspoon Worcestershire sauce

2 cups brown sugar

2 bay leaves

3 Macintosh apples, coarsely chopped

10 boneless, skinless chicken breasts

2 Tablespoons salt

1 Tablespoon black pepper

Marinate chicken for 24 hours in juice and seasonings. Grill chicken on barbecue or in oven.

MACINTOSH RELISH

1 Macintosh apple, diced

small

1 Golden apple, diced small

1 Granny Smith apple, diced small

1 green pepper, diced small

1 oz. shallots, diced small

1 teaspoon ginger, diced fine

1 teaspoon garlic, diced fine

2 ounce apple cider

2.5 ounce apple juice

2.5 ounce mango chutney

1 Tablespoon brown sugar

2 Tablespoons parsley, chopped fine

1 Tablespoon lemon juice

Saute apples, pepper, shallots, ginger and garlic in 1 Tablespoon butter, deglaze with lemon, cider, apple juice, let reduce for 10 minutes, add brown sugar and chutney. Cool. Add parsley. Serve with chicken. Submitted by Chef William Collins, Sheraton Oaks Hotel, Novi.

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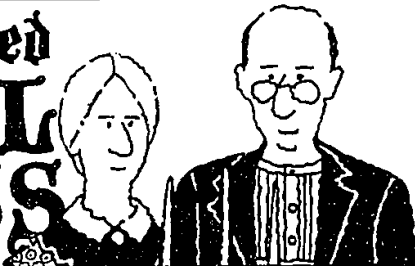
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