



## Featured Recipes

### Gallo Pinto

We just returned from a fantastic McDougall Adventure trip to Costa Rica. The food was exceptionally delicious, with a wide variety of choices available at each meal. I will be sharing some of the favorite recipes in the newsletter over the next few months. One of the most common dishes in Costa Rica is Gallo Pinto, which is very often eaten for breakfast. This black bean and rice dish translates into "spotted rooster" and has many variations. It is served with either Salsa Lizano, a Costa Rican bottled sauce that is very popular, or with a fresh tomato salsa called Pico de Gallo. Serve it on a plate or rolled up in a fresh corn tortilla.

Preparation Time: 5 minutes (need cooked rice)

Cooking time: 15 minutes

Servings: 4

¼ cup vegetable broth or water  
1 onion, chopped  
2 cloves garlic, minced  
2 cans black beans, drained (liquid reserved) and rinsed  
3 cups cooked brown rice  
1 teaspoon ground cumin  
1 teaspoon ground coriander  
½ teaspoon ground ginger  
¼ teaspoon salt  
freshly ground black pepper

Place the water in a large non-stick frying pan and add the onion and garlic. Cook, stirring frequently until onion softens and begins to stick to the bottom of the pan. Add a bit more water or broth and repeat until onion begins to stick again. Add remaining ingredients and mix well. Add a bit of the reserved liquid from the beans to make the rice look "dirty", if desired. Cook until heated through. Serve hot with salsa on top.

Hint: To be more authentic, you can cook dry black beans in water to cover until tender (about 3-4 hours). You will need about 3 cups of cooked black beans. Save some of the cooking liquid to mix with the beans and rice.

### Fresh Corn Tortillas

We had fresh corn tortillas made for us at every meal during our recent McDougall Adventure to Costa Rica. We all watched with amazement as the "tortilla lady" made perfectly round tortillas by hand all day long. The recipe is very simple, but the forming of the tortillas may take a bit of practice. A tortilla press may help in the process. Cook the tortillas one at a time in a non-stick frying pan.

Preparation Time: 30 minutes (includes resting time)

Cooking Time: 20 minutes (in batches)

Servings: makes 16 tortillas

2 cups masa harina  
1 ¼ cups hot water

Combine the masa harina and water in a large bowl. Mix well and knead with your hands for several

minutes until the dough is smooth and thick. Cover with plastic wrap and let rest for 20 minutes.

Heat a non-stick frying pan over medium heat until a drop of water bounces on it. Take a piece of the dough, about 1 ½ inches in size, and roll into a ball. Flatten the ball between two pieces of waxed paper using your hands, a tortilla press, or a small heavy frying pan until it is about 5 inches in diameter and about 1/16 inch thick. Peel off the waxed paper and place tortilla on the hot pan. Cook until lightly browned on each side. Place in a cloth covered basket. Repeat until all tortillas are done.

Hint: Masa Harina is corn flour made especially for tortillas. You may find it in some supermarkets, but most likely you will need to go to a Mexican or Latin American market to purchase this. Store any unused Masa Harina in the refrigerator or freezer to keep it fresh.

### **Pico de Gallo**

This fresh tomato salsa is served at many Costa Rican meals. It translates into "rooster beak" in Spanish, and is quite spicy. The amount of jalapenos used may be varied to adjust the "heat" of the salsa.

Preparation Time: 15 minutes  
Chilling time: 1 hour (optional)  
Servings: variable

2 cups chopped tomato  
½ cup finely chopped onion  
1-2 jalapeno peppers, seeded and finely chopped  
1 clove garlic, minced  
¼ cup chopped fresh cilantro  
2 tablespoons lime juice  
dash salt

Combine all ingredients in a tightly covered bowl. Refrigerate for at least 1 hour turning the container over several times to allow flavors to blend. (This is an optional step. The salsa may be served immediately, if desired.)

### **Potato Pancakes**

This is another of my family's favorites, which we have been enjoying for over 30 years. The starch from the freshly grated potatoes with the addition of the flour helps to hold these together. Do not grate the potatoes much before you are going to prepare the dish because the potatoes will tend to turn black if they sit too long before cooking.

Preparation Time: 20 minutes  
Cooking Time: 30 minutes (in batches)  
Servings: 6

½ medium sweet onion, grated  
4-5 medium russet potatoes, grated  
5 tablespoons white whole wheat flour  
3 tablespoons water  
3 tablespoons fresh parsley, chopped

Mix all ingredients in a bowl. Heat a non-stick griddle to medium heat. Ladle potato mixture on

griddle, flattening slightly. Cook about 5-8 minutes on first side; turn and cook an additional 5-8 minutes.

Hints: Keep warm in a 200 degree oven until all are cooked. Grate potatoes and onions in a food processor to save time. For appearance sake, you may wish to peel the potatoes before grating, however it is not necessary to peel them, just scrub them well. Serve with applesauce, ketchup, barbecue sauce, gravy or Pico de Gallo.

### **Creamy Golden Gravy**

This gravy is made with brown rice flour instead of wheat flour. The great thing about using rice flour instead of wheat flour for thickening is that it doesn't form lumps like wheat flour often does. You just sprinkle it over the top of a hot liquid, stir it in and it thickens nicely without any lumps.

Preparation Time: 5 minutes

Cooking Time: 10 minutes

Servings: makes 2 cups

1 ½ cups vegetable broth  
½ cup water  
3 tablespoons low sodium soy sauce  
2 tablespoons tahini  
¼ cup brown rice flour  
freshly ground black pepper

Place the broth and water in a saucepan. Combine the soy sauce and tahini in a bowl and add to the liquid in the saucepan. Bring to a boil, stirring occasionally to smooth out the tahini. When mixture is simmering and smooth, sprinkle the brown rice flour over the top, about a tablespoon at a time, and stir in. Continue to add the rice flour, stirring until sauce becomes thickened. Season with freshly ground black pepper to taste. Serve at once.

Hints: This may be made ahead and refrigerated. It will thicken slightly more when refrigerated. To reheat, place in a saucepan, add a small amount of water, whisk to combine and then heat slowly, stirring occasionally, until hot.

### **Moroccan Red Lentil Soup**

I recently bought a book called Arabesque, by Claudia Roden, about the tastes of Morocco, Turkey, and Lebanon. I am enjoying reading about the food from this region of the world and hope to share some of my discoveries with you over the next few months. Versions of this soup, called Harira, are served all over Morocco.

Preparation Time: 15 minutes

Cooking time: 60 minutes

Servings: 6-8

½ cup water  
1 onion, chopped  
4 stalks celery, chopped  
6 cups vegetable broth  
1 ½ cups chopped tomatoes  
1 cup red lentils  
1 15 ounce can garbanzo beans, drained and rinsed  
1 bay leaf  
½ teaspoon ground cinnamon

½ teaspoon ground ginger  
½ teaspoon ground turmeric  
¼ teaspoon ground coriander  
¼ teaspoon black pepper  
½ cup orzo  
½ cup chopped cilantro  
2 tablespoons lemon juice

Place the water in a large soup pot with the onion and celery. Cook, stirring occasionally, until vegetables have softened slightly. Add broth, tomatoes, lentils, garbanzos, bay leaf, cinnamon, ginger, turmeric, coriander and black pepper. Bring to a boil reduce heat, cover and simmer until lentils are tender about 45 minutes. Add the orzo, cilantro and lemon juice. Continue to cook about 10 more minutes. Serve hot.

Hint: This is delicious served in a bowl, with some flat bread to scoop up the juices, or place a dollop or two of cooked rice in a bowl and ladle the soup over the rice.

### **Hearty Split Pea Vegetable Soup**

This is a thick soup filled with chunky vegetables and it is very comforting on a cool, rainy day. Serve by itself in a bowl, or ladle over brown rice for a satisfying meal.

Preparation Time: 15 minutes  
Cooking time: 1 hour 10 minutes  
Servings: 6-8

2 cups dried split peas  
8 cups water  
1 large onion, chopped  
3 stalks celery, chopped  
2 carrots, chopped  
2 cups chopped fingerling potatoes  
2 cloves garlic, minced  
2 tablespoons parsley flakes  
2 bay leaves  
1 teaspoon dry mustard  
½ teaspoon smoked paprika  
freshly ground white pepper  
1 large tomato, chopped  
½ cup chopped fresh cilantro or parsley

Place the peas and water in a large soup pot. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer uncovered for 20 minutes. Add the remaining ingredients, except the tomato and fresh cilantro or parsley. Mix well, bring to a boil again, reduce heat, cover and simmer for about 45 minutes, until all vegetables are tender. Add the tomato and fresh cilantro or parsley. Season with a bit of sea salt, if desired. Mix well and let rest for 5 minutes before serving.