



Featured Recipes

Baco-yuba

While waiting for the first tomatoes from my garden this year, I started thinking about how I was going to enjoy them on toasted bread, which started my dreams about baco-yuba. I used to make this faithfully every year when I had my parents to help with the preparation because it does take a bit of work. However the results are so worth it and it does make a large batch which keeps well in ziplock bags in the pantry. I made this again a couple of months ago and my grandsons and I enjoyed it so much that it will be a regular staple in my pantry this summer, and as soon as my tomatoes start to ripen we'll be loving our baco-lettuce-tomato sandwiches.

Preparation Time: 30-45 minutes

Cooking Time: 30 minutes (in batches)

Servings: makes about 40-50 strips

1 package flat yuba sheets (see note below)

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup low-sodium soy sauce

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup water

Dash liquid smoke seasoning (optional)

Cut the yuba sheets into strips about 4-5 inches by 2 inches. Combine the soy sauce, water and smoke flavoring (if desired) in a shallow pan or tray. Soak strips of yuba in this mixture for 5 minutes, putting in at one time only as many as can be covered by the liquid. Remove the strips from the liquid and lay them on a broiler pan-do not overlap. Broil about 6 inches from the heat until the tops begin to bubble slightly, about 35 to 45 seconds. Watch them carefully, they burn easily! Turn over with tongs and broil on the other side about 30 seconds. (The whole broiling process will only take about 2-3 minutes.) Remove from the pan and place on paper towels to cool. Repeat with the remaining yuba strips. Store carefully in large ziplock bags (the strips are very delicate and break easily).

Note: Yuba, also called dried bean curd, is a by-product of soy milk. It is usually sold in Asian markets and is available in thin sheets, available dried or fresh-frozen. If using the fresh-frozen variety, thaw and proceed as directed above. If you are using dried yuba, soften the sheets in water for about 15 minutes, then separate the softened sheets, cut into strips about 4-5 inches by 2 inches and dry slightly on paper towels. Then proceed as directed above.

Hints: My father used to stand in front of the broiler with the door open and the tongs in his hand so he could easily see when the yuba strips needed to be turned over. I could always count on him to make perfect baco-yuba every time. The broiling goes very quickly, so don't be tempted to close the oven door and walk away for a few minutes. These need constant attention!!

Edamame Surprise

Once again I am back to our favorite one dish quick meal. However, I have changed it for the better, I think, so I invite you to give it another go and see what you think.

Preparation Time: 5 minutes (cooked rice needed)

Cooking Time: 10 minutes

Servings: 2-3

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup vegetable broth

1 tablespoon soy sauce

½ to 1 teaspoon sambal oelek
1-2 teaspoons salt-free seasoning mixture
1 10 ounce bag frozen shelled edamame
1 10 ounce bag finely shredded cabbage
1 10 ounce bag frozen corn
2 cups cooked brown rice
1-2 chopped fresh tomatoes

Place the broth, soy sauce, sambal oelek and seasoning mixture in a large non-stick sauté pan and mix well. Add the edamame and cabbage, cook stirring frequently for about 4 minutes. Add the corn and continue to cook for another 3 minutes. Stir in the rice and tomatoes and cook for another 2 minutes.

Hint: I used to make this with frozen lima beans, but since lima beans are not a favorite for most people, I tried it with soybeans (edamame) and now my grandsons even like it! If you would like this to be more rice based, just add another 2 cups of rice to the final mixture. And add more fresh tomatoes if you have them in your garden. Top with Sriracha hot sauce for more heat.

Chipotle Sauce

This is quite a spicy salad dressing that was prepared for our group during the July 2010 Costa Rica trip. John and I enjoyed it so much that we spooned some of it on almost everything we ate (except for the desserts). To make this a bit less spicy, leave out the jalapeno pepper.

Preparation Time: 5 minutes
Cooking Time: 10 minutes
Resting Time: 1 day
Servings: variable

1 7 to 8 ounce can chipotle peppers in adobo sauce
2 ounces rice vinegar
1 jalapeno (seeded for less heat)
1 ½ cups water

Place all ingredients in a large saucepan and slowly bring to a simmer. Pour ingredients into a food processor and process until smooth. Pour into a covered container and let rest for 1 day.

Mushroom Sauce

This was my favorite sauce for pasta during our recent trip to Costa Rica. A simple, creamy sauce that lets the flavors of the mushrooms shine through.

Preparation Time: 15 minutes
Cooking Time: 15 minutes
Servings: 4-5

4 ounces Portobello mushrooms, finely chopped
4 ounces oyster mushrooms, finely chopped
4 ounces button mushrooms, finely chopped
1 onion, finely chopped
4 cups soy milk
4 tablespoons cornstarch mixed in ½ cup cold water

Place all the mushrooms in a large pot, cooking and stirring until softened. Remove from pot and set

aside. Add the onion to the mushroom liquid and cook until onion turns translucent. Return mushrooms to pot and add the soy milk. Slowly bring to a boil. When mixture starts boiling, slowly stir in the corn-starch mixture. Cook and stir until thickened. Serve over pasta, whole grains or potatoes.

Gallo Pinto

This dish is served every morning for breakfast in Costa Rica. 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, or with a fresh tomato salsa called pico de gallo. We like this rolled up in a fresh soft corn tortilla.

Preparation Time: 15 minutes (need cooked rice)

Cooking Time: 30 minutes

Servings: 8-10

Beans:

¼ cup vegetable broth

1 onion, chopped

2 stalks celery, chopped

1 teaspoon minced fresh garlic

3 15 ounce cans black beans, drained and rinsed

1 bay leaf

1 teaspoon dried oregano

Vegetables:

¼ cup vegetable broth

1 onion, chopped

1 stalk celery, chopped

1 tomato, chopped

¼ cup chopped fresh cilantro

4 cups cooked long grain brown rice

hot sauce

Beans:

Place the vegetable broth in a medium-large saucepan. Add the onion, celery and garlic. Cook over medium heat, stirring frequently until vegetables are softened. Add remaining ingredients, mix well and cook over low heat for 20 minutes, stirring occasionally. Set aside.

Vegetables:

Place the vegetable broth in a large non-stick frying pan. Add onion and celery and cook over medium heat for 5 minutes, stirring frequently. Add tomato and cilantro and cook for another 5 minutes. Add the bean mixture and the rice. Mix well. Heat through and season to taste with the hot sauce. Remove bay leaf before serving.

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.)

Fresh Corn Tortillas

We had fresh corn tortillas made for us at every breakfast during our recent McDougall Adventure to Costa Rica. We all watched with amazement as the "tortilla lady" made perfectly round tortillas by hand with seemingly no effort at all. 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, 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.

Costa Rican Mango-Avocado Salad

The mangos and avocados are amazing in Costa Rica and this is one variation of some of the salads that were available most days during our July 2010 trip. The avocado makes it rich, but it gives a bit of creaminess to the salad.

Preparation Time: 15 minutes
Resting Time: 1 hour
Servings: 4-6

1 large mango, peeled, pitted and chopped
1 large ripe avocado, peeled, pitted and chopped
1 ½ cups shredded cabbage
1 cup finely chopped red bell pepper
½ cup chopped cucumber
6 green onions, chopped
¼ cup finely chopped fresh cilantro

4 tablespoons fresh lime juice
½ teaspoon agave nectar
Dash salt
Freshly ground pepper to taste

Place all the ingredients in a large covered bowl. Toss until well mixed. Refrigerate at least 1 hour before serving, tossing several times during that hour to make sure flavors are well combined.

Hints: If you can find some fresh pea shoots, they are delicious tossed on top of this salad before serving.