

PAIR UP

with Maria Terry



May 2020 – Para tu madre

Cooking at home has never been so important. With our country mired in the Coronavirus and restaurants closed for dining, here is a restaurant quality meal you can make for your family at home. If your mom does not live with you but is nearby, this is a meal you can pack up and take over to her. If she lives far away, you can probably order a meal similar to this from a restaurant to be delivered. Then, like so many are doing, enjoy the meal together over an Internet connection. This special gesture for mom will make Mother's Day feel a little less lonely.

Margaritas with chips and pico de gallo is a great way to start the day. Honestly, you can start this Mother's Day party any time you want. If you think about it, what are margaritas but just fruit juice with a little extra kick? Here is a margarita recipe that my husband and I modified from one we found online. I happened to have an extra orange in the fridge that had no place to go, so I added it and, bam, what a difference. Just that little extra sweetness adds so much flavor. I think it brings out the orange flavor of the triple sec. Those who are serious can even add an extra float of triple sec on top.

Michelada is a Mexican Bloody Mary. South of the border, this version is known as a Michelada Cubana. With a flavor somewhere between A1 steak sauce and a Bloody Mary, it is bold and perfect with chicken fajitas. Note: Maggi is a dark liquid seasoning that is reminiscent of soy sauce but doesn't contain soy. It can be found in Asian and Latin markets. If you can't find it, soy sauce is a fine substitute. If you need more than just chicken fajitas, open up a can of refried beans and cook up this Mexican Red Rice. It all depends on how many chips you're eating with your margaritas!

You'll probably be pretty full after you get through appetizers and the main course, but later you may want something sweet. Go full south of the border with this fun Tres Leches Cake that takes a few liberties on the classic recipe. I like the idea of making a cake that is "not your mother's cake" for Mother's Day! Coffee is perfect with a super sweet dessert. And, if you are looking to keep the party going, try making it authentic Café Mexicano by adding a little coffee liqueur and tequila!

So, go on. Pair Up!

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Margarita

INGREDIENTS

¾ cup lime juice
¼ cup orange juice
¾ cup simple syrup
1 cup tequila
½ cup triple sec

DIRECTIONS

Mix. Chill well. Pour over salt-rimmed glasses filled with ice.

Yield: about four 6oz. servings

Pico de Gallo

INGREDIENTS

2 large tomatoes, diced
2 Tbsp. diced red onion
2 Tbsp. chopped cilantro
Juice of one or two limes
1 tsp. chopped serrano pepper (opt.)
Salt and pepper (to taste)

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DIRECTIONS

Mix all ingredients.

Yield: 2 cups

Guacamole

INGREDIENTS

1 large avocado
1 small clove of garlic, chopped fine
Salt (to taste)

DIRECTIONS

Mix all ingredients until smooth.

Yield: 1-1½ cups

Michelada Cubana (Mexican Bloody Mary)

INGREDIENTS

Salt, for rimming the glasses
¼ cup freshly squeezed lime juice (from about 2 medium limes), rinds reserved
Ice
2 tsp. Worcestershire sauce
2 tsp. hot sauce, such as Tabasco
1 tsp. Maggi or soy sauce
1½ cups light Mexican beer, such as Corona
Freshly ground black pepper for garnish

DIRECTIONS

Place enough salt in a wide, shallow dish to cover the bottom. Rub the rims of two glasses with the reserved lime rinds and dip the glasses into the salt. Fill the glasses with ice and set aside.

Place the lime juice, Worcestershire sauce, hot sauce, and Maggi or soy sauce in a pitcher and mix to combine. Add beer last

and stir gently. Pour into the prepared glasses, top with a few grinds of pepper, and serve.

Yield: 8 servings

Grilled Mexican Lime Chicken Fajitas

INGREDIENTS

1 tsp. salt
1 tsp. chili powder
½ tsp. garlic powder
1/8 cup oil
¼ cup fresh lime juice
2 lbs. boneless, skinless chicken breasts

DIRECTIONS

Combine all ingredients for the marinade. Marinate chicken in mixture for at least 2 hours in a resealable plastic bag or dish. Drain chicken well.

Grill outside over medium-hot coals or gas grill for 5-6 minutes per side or until cooked through. Or, sear in a bit of olive oil on all sides in an ovenproof pan and finish in a 350°F oven for 10 minutes.

Cover and rest chicken for 5 minutes and slice on the diagonal into ½” thick slices. Serve with hot tortillas, sautéed peppers and onions, guacamole, and sour cream.

Yield: 6 servings

Red Rice

INGREDIENTS

1 Tbsp. vegetable oil
1 cup long-grain white rice
1/3 cup finely chopped white onion

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1 clove garlic, minced
2¼ cups chicken broth
3 Tbsp. tomato paste
1¼ teaspoon kosher salt
1 serrano chile
1 fresh cilantro sprig

DIRECTIONS

In a large heavy saucepan, heat the vegetable oil on medium-high heat. Add the rice, onions, and garlic. Sauté until rice is opaque and fragrant, about 2 minutes.

Add the chicken broth, tomato paste, and salt. Mix well to incorporate evenly. Add in the chile and cilantro sprig.

Cover, reduce the heat to low, and simmer until broth is absorbed and rice is tender, about 30 minutes. Fluff with a fork and serve immediately.

Yield: 6-8 servings

No es tres leches de tu madre ("Not your mother's three milks" cake)

INGREDIENTS

For the cake:

1¾ cup flour
1 tsp. baking powder
½ tsp. ground cinnamon
½ tsp. kosher salt
Pinch freshly grated nutmeg
½ cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, at room temperature
1 cup granulated sugar
2 tsp. pure vanilla extract (Mexican, if possible)
5 large eggs

For the glaze:

(1) 12-oz. can evaporated milk
(1) 14-oz. can sweetened condensed milk
1½ cups half and half
½ tsp. vanilla extract

For the whipped topping:

2 cups heavy whipping cream, cold
3 Tbsp. powdered sugar
1 tsp. pure vanilla extract
½ tsp. ground cinnamon, for dusting the top

Optional garnishes:

Toasted unsweetened coconut
Fresh strawberries

DIRECTIONS

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Lightly spray (or butter & flour) a 9x13-inch pan; set aside.

In a medium mixing bowl, whisk together flour, baking powder, cinnamon, salt, and nutmeg; set aside.

In the bowl of a stand mixer (or a large mixing bowl with a hand mixer) beat the butter on medium speed until pale and fluffy, about 2 minutes. Reduce speed to low and add sugar and vanilla. Scrape down the sides and add the eggs, mixing after each addition.

With mixing speed on low, gradually add the dry ingredients, mix just until combined. The batter will be thick. Spread the batter into the prepared pan, place in the oven, and bake for 20 to 25 minutes or until cake is lightly golden brown and springs back when touched. NOTE: It will rise significantly during the baking process. Remove from the oven and allow to cool in the pan for 5 minutes.

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Meanwhile, in a large glass measuring cup or a medium bowl, whisk together the evaporated milk, sweetened condensed milk, half and half, and vanilla extract. Poke the top of the cake with a skewer or fork. Slowly pour the glaze over the cake, allowing the liquid to be absorbed before pouring more. Once fully absorbed, cover with foil and place in the refrigerator and allow the cake to sit for at least 4 hours before serving, preferably overnight.

Remove the cake from the refrigerator. In the bowl of a stand mixer or with a hand mixer, beat the heavy cream, powdered sugar, and vanilla extract until stiff peaks form. Spread over the cake, and then dust with cinnamon. Garnish with toasted coconut and fresh strawberries, if desired. Serve immediately or return to the refrigerator until ready to serve.

Yield: 18 servings

Café Mexicano

INGREDIENTS

16 oz. coffee (black, brewed, and hot)
1 tsp. sugar
1 oz. coffee liqueur
¾ oz. tequila

DIRECTIONS

Place a small amount of coffee on a saucer. Dip the rim of each glass or mug into the brewed coffee and then into the sugar to coat the rim. In each glass or mug add half of the tequila and Kahlua. Now add 8 ounces of the hot coffee

Yield: 2 servings