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Recipe of the Week

July 21, 2007

Two Tomato Recipes in Honor of Our Annual Tomato Tasting

Fried Green Tomatoes with Roasted Corn Vinaigrette
from Dorette Snover of C'est Si Bon Cooking School

Your tomatoes will feel like movie star material once you try this recipe on for size. A stone-ground cornmeal, which has a floury texture, will stick more easily to the unripe orbs than a grainy one. Season the cornmeal with a pinch of cayenne pepper, cumin, and oregano for a spicy blast on these southern country favorites. It's hard to think about doing these justice when fried in something other than bacon grease (there I've said it) but if you want to try canola oil, make my day.

Ingredients

For the tomatoes:

4 medium green tomatoes
2/3 cup yellow or white stone ground cornmeal
1 1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon black pepper
Large pinch cayenne pepper
1/2 teaspoon each ground cumin and crumbled dried oregano
3-4 tablespoons rendered bacon fat

For the vinaigrette:

3 ears grill or oven roasted corn, kernels removed
1 -2 tablespoons pickled jalapenos, chopped finely
2 large ripe yellow tomatoes, chopped finely
1/4 cup each scallion and fresh cilantro, finely minced
Juice of one lime, lemon, or orange
Little olive oil
Pinch sugar
Salt and black pepper to taste

Procedure

First, make the salsa by combining all the prepared ingredients in a medium bowl, squeeze in the lime juice, sugar, salt, and pepper. Set aside for about an hour to develop and blend flavors. Slice the tomatoes about 1/2 inch thick, then pat the surfaces dry with paper toweling. Mix the cornmeal and remaining ingredients, except the bacon fat, in a deep pie plate. Dredge the slices in the seasoned corn meal, make sure each slice is well coated. In a large heavy skillet over medium high heat, fry the tomatoes quickly in the sizzling hot fat. This should take only 1-1 1/2 minutes to a side. Serve immediately with the vinaigrette.

Tomato and Onion Panade

From Sheila Neal, Market Staff

Panade is a French peasant dish that is essentially a bread and vegetable casserole. The first time I made this, I ate it with my friend and colleague Kelly Clark. We almost died it was so good. We each had a bowlful of panade and a glass of red wine for our lunch. And that was so satisfying. It was that week in August that always turns out cooler than expected and gives you a taste of the impending fall. Don't let the procedure for this dish discourage you. Be patient the first time and the second and third will be a cinch.

Ingredients

1 1/2 pounds yellow onions, sliced thin
1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil
6 garlic cloves, sliced thin
Salt
1/2 pound tomatoes, any variety and color, cut into bite-size chunks
8-10 cups day-old peasant-style bread, cut into 1-inch cubes
4 cups chicken or vegetable stock
6 ounces Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese, grated

Procedure

Put the onions, olive oil, and a couple pinches of salt in a high-sided sauté pan or saucepan and place on medium high heat. After a few minutes, give the onions a stir. They should begin to turn golden. Once they all begin to look golden, add the garlic and turn the heat to low. Continue to cook on low until onions are very soft but not mushy, about 20 minutes. If the onions begin to dry out you can put a lid on the pan to trap some moisture. You should get about 2 cups of onions. Set aside.

Preheat oven to 275 degrees. Toss the bread with olive oil to coat, a few pinches of salt and enough stock to moisten, about 1/4 cup. Take a 2-quart casserole or heavy enameled Dutch oven (this is where the Le Creuset comes in handy!) and begin to assemble the panade. Start with the onions and layer on the bottom of the dish, then the bread, another layer of onions, then the tomatoes and a layer of cheese. Continue in this order until the pan is very full. Make sure the top layer has a little bit of each ingredient showing. You want the rustic look so it is good if the layers are uneven. Drizzle with olive oil.

Take the remaining stock and heat it up. Taste for salt. Add stock slowly to baking dish. It will absorb some of the liquid and you want to accurately gauge the amount of stock you're adding. Add enough stock to fill the pan 2/3 of the way up the sides. Put on a burner over low heat and bring to a simmer. Cover top of panade loosely with parchment and then with foil. Place in oven with a pan or foil underneath to catch the drippings. Bake until bubbly, about 1 1/2 hours. Uncover the panade, increase oven temperature to 375 degrees and bake until browned, about 20 minutes. The panade will puff up. Check underneath the crust to make sure the inside is silky and oozy. If it's dry, you can add a bit more stock and cook 10 minutes more. Bring to table in all its glory. Wait for it to settle, and then serve directly from the baking dish. You can hold the panade in a low oven for up to an hour. Just brown it right before serving.

Other suggestions: Add more stock and you will have a looser panade, like risotto. You can reheat the panade the next day by pan-frying it. Just take a scoop, put in a pan with a little oil, and brown.