



Cheese-stuffed Chilies

Ingredients for Cheese-stuffed Chilies

CHEESE-STUFFED CHILIES

CHILES RELLENOS (chee-leh-s ray-yeh-nohs)

Poblano chilies are the perfect size for stuffing, and, though they are somewhat less sturdy when they have been blistered and peeled, they will not fall to pieces. These Mexican chilies are filled with a mixture of two cheeses, then coated with crumbs and fried.

- 8 poblano chilies, 3½ to 4½ inches long
- 8 tablespoons shredded Monterey Jack cheese (about 2 ounces)
- 8 tablespoons shredded Cheddar cheese (about 2 ounces)
- ½ cup dry bread crumbs
- 4 eggs, separated
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon cream of tartar
- Vegetable oil
- Mexican Sauce (page 207)
- Dairy sour cream
- Snipped fresh cilantro

Set oven control to broil or 550°. Place chilies on rack in broiler pan. Broil with tops 4 to 5 inches from heat, turning frequently, until skins blister all around, up to 15 minutes. Place in plastic bags and close tightly; let stand 20 minutes. Carefully peel chilies, starting at stem end. Cut lengthwise slit down side of each chili. Carefully remove seeds and membranes; rinse. Fill each chili with 1 tablespoon Monterey Jack cheese and 1 tablespoon Cheddar cheese; coat with bread crumbs. Cover and refrigerate 20 minutes.

Beat egg whites, salt and cream of tartar in large bowl until stiff. Beat egg yolks until thick and lemon-colored, about 5 minutes; fold into egg whites. Heat 1 to 1½ inches oil to 375° in Dutch oven. Coat each chili again with bread crumbs; dip into egg mixture. Fry 1 or 2 chilies at a time, turning once, until puffy and golden brown, about 4 minutes. Drain chilies; keep warm in oven.

Prepare Mexican Sauce; pour over chilies. Garnish with sour cream and cilantro.

8 servings

TORTILLA SOUP

SOPA DE TORTILLA (soh-pah deh tohr-tee-yah)

This Mexican soup features a rich broth and a garnish of fried tortilla strips. Corn tortillas, with a fresh corn flavor and slight crunch, are widely available fresh, frozen and even canned.

6-inch corn tortillas
¼ cup vegetable oil
¼ cup water
1 medium tomato, cut into fourths
1 small onion, cut into fourths
1 clove garlic
2 cans (10¾ ounces each) condensed chicken broth
1 broth can water
¼ teaspoon ground coriander
¼ teaspoon salt
⅛ teaspoon pepper
1 sprig mint (optional)
Shredded Monterey Jack or Cheddar cheese

Cut tortillas into ¼-inch strips. Heat oil in 10-inch skillet until hot. Fry ¼ of the tortilla strips at a time over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until crisp and brown, about 3 minutes; drain.

Place ¼ cup water, the tomato, onion and garlic in blender container. Cover and blend on high speed until smooth. Heat tomato mixture, chicken broth, 1 can water, the coriander, salt, pepper and mint sprig to boiling in 3-quart saucepan. Cook uncovered 3 minutes. Sprinkle each serving with cheese and tortilla strips.

8 servings (¾ cup each)