



Les Marmitons
NEW JERSEY

Funky Shrimp Wontons with Sweet Potato Mash and Pineapple Rum Dipping Sauce

32 servings - Makes 128 hors d'oeuvre

Ingredients

For the Dipping Sauce:

2 cup diced (1/4 inch) pineapple
4 cups orange juice
4 tablespoon sugar
4 star anise
1 cup white rum

For the Plantain-Sweet Potato Mash:

6 green plantains
4 medium white sweet potatoes (AKA batata or boniato; about 3 pounds)

9 cloves garlic, minced or pressed
Kosher or fine sea salt and freshly ground pepper

To Wrap and Fry the Shrimp:

4 package wonton skins
8 pounds jumbo shrimp (about 128) peeled and deveined
Vegetable oil

Preparation:

1. Make the sauce: Bring the pineapple, orange juice, sugar and star anise to a boil in a medium saucepan over high heat. Adjust the heat so the liquid is simmering and cook until the liquid is syrupy and reduced to one-fourth its original volume (about 2 cup). Add the rum and cook 2 to 3 minutes. Remove from the heat and cool. The sauce can be made up to a week before serving. Rewarm gently before serving.

2. Make the sweet potato-plantain mash: Peel the plantains and sweet potatoes. Cut both into 1-inch dice and put into a pot large enough to hold them comfortably. Pour in enough cold water to cover generously. Add the garlic and bring to a boil and cook until soft, about 20 minutes. Drain thoroughly, add the garlic and salt and pepper to taste and mash until fairly smooth.

3. Wrap the shrimp: Lay a wonton wrapper on the work surface with one of the corners pointing toward you. Center a shrimp over the wrapper with the tail overhanging the point closest to you. Moisten the edges of the wrapper with a fingertip dipped in water. Spread a tablespoon of the mash over the shrimp, coating the top of the shrimp evenly. Fold the corner farthest from you over the shrimp, then fold the two side corners over the shrimp to

encase it completely. The corner closest to you is left unfolded with the tail of the shrimp sticking out. Press all the edges gently to seal up the shrimp good and tight. The shrimp may be made to this point and refrigerated for up to 3 hours or frozen for up to 1 month. Defrost frozen shrimp in the refrigerator for a few hours before frying them.

4. Just before serving, fry the shrimp. Pour $\frac{1}{2}$ inch of oil into a large heavy skillet. Heat over medium heat until the tip of the handle of a wooden spoon held in the oil gives off a fairly steady sizzle (about 350° F). Slip as many shrimp into the oil as fit comfortably. Fry, turning as necessary, until evenly browned on all sides, about 5 minutes. If the shrimp start to color too fast, turn down the heat or the wrapper will brown before the shrimp have a chance to cook through. Drain on paper towels. The shrimp may be kept warm in an oven heated to 200° F or "Warm" while frying the rest. Serve hot with sauce in a bowl on the side.



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Weekend Tamales

30 servings Makes 60 tamales

Ingredients

For the Shredded Pork:

9 pound bone-in pork butt, boned and the bone reserved
2 onion, unpeeled
2big bunch cilantro
4 tablespoons salt
4 bay leaves
3 tablespoon black peppercorns

For the Picadillo:

4 cup Achiote Oil (below)
8 cup Sofrito (below)
1 teaspoon ground cumin
1/4 teaspoon ground allspice
1/4 teaspoon ground cloves

Kosher or fine sea salt and freshly ground pepper

Three 4-ounce package dried corn husks (see Note)

For the Masa (12 cups):

6 cups instant corn masa flour, such as Maseca
2 tablespoon ground cumin
2 tablespoon kosher or fine sea salt
2 tablespoon ancho or other chile powder
8 cups pork broth (pork cooking liquid), warm
2 cup vegetable oil

Preparation:

1. Preheat the oven to 400 F. Put the bones in a small roasting pan. Roast until mahogany brown, about 1 hour. Remove and cool.
2. Meanwhile, put the boneless pork roast, onion, cilantro, salt, bay leaves, and peppercorns in a pot large enough to hold them comfortably. Pour in enough cold water to cover the pork completely. Bring to a boil over high heat. Adjust the heat so the liquid is simmering and cook, skimming the foam and fat off the surface, until the pork is falling-apart tender, about 3 hours. Add the bone when it comes out of the oven. (Check and skim often, especially at the beginning of the cooking—you'll be surprised how much stuff surfaces.) Discard the bone and cool the pork in the broth. The broth and pork can be made up to 2 days in advance. Refrigerate the pork and broth right in the pot and rewarm over gently heat before continuing.

3. As soon as it is cool enough to handle (or re-warmed enough to make shredding easy), shred the pork coarsely, removing most but not all of the fat as you go. The fat will add a melting tenderness and flavor to the pork.

4. Make the picadillo: Heat the achiote oil in a large, deep skillet over medium heat. Add the sofrito and cook, stirring, until the liquid is evaporated and the sofrito is sizzling. Stir in the cumin, allspice, and cloves and stir for a minute or two. Stir in the shredded pork until it is heated through and coated with seasonings. Continue cooking and stirring until the pork begins to stick to the skillet. Pour in 1 cup pork broth and stir until almost all of the water is evaporated. Set the picadillo aside. The picadillo can be made up to 2 days in advance. Reheat over low heat, adding a little water if necessary, until warmed through.

5. Take the corn husks out of the package and put them in a large bowl. Pour enough warm water over them to cover them completely. Weight the husks down with a plate or overturned bowl to keep them submerged as they soak. Soak until pliable, about 1 hour. Set up a steamer (see TIPS).

6. Make the masa: Stir the corn masa flour, cumin, salt, and chile powder together in a large bowl until mixed. Add the broth and vegetable oil and stir to make a smooth, moist-but-not-sticky dough. Set aside.

7. Form the tamales: The corn husks will be different sizes. Start with those that are at least 7 inches across or so at the widest point and save smaller husks for backup. Open up a husk on the work surface with the shorter end closest to you. Center $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of the corn masa over the husk. Make a little indentation down the center of the masa, spreading it out as you go, but making sure to leave at least 1 inch along the short ends and 2 inches along the sides so the tamale can be folded up easily. Spoon 2 tablespoons of the pork picadillo into the indentation. Fold the two sides of the husk over the filling, then fold the end closest to you up and over the filling. Leave the other end open. Line the tamales up, folded and seam side down, on a baking sheet.

8. Steam the tamales until the dough is tender and moist, 1 hour should do it. Serve hot on a platter. Let people help themselves and unwrap their own tamales. Careful, they stay hot for a while.

Note: Dried corn husks can be found in Mexican groceries and any supermarket with a well-stocked Latin food aisle. They do vary in size within a package and are very inexpensive, so you might want to pick up four packages to be on the safe side.

Variation:

* Olive and Raisin Tamales: Toss $\frac{3}{4}$ cup pitted small (like Nicoise) olives and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup raisins together in a small bowl to mix them. Proceed as above, using a scant tablespoon of the

olive-raisin mix to fill each tamale. If you run out of filling, simply toss together a little more of the olive-raisin mix.

* If you prefer, make the filling substituting 4 pounds of boneless chicken thighs for the pork. The chicken thighs will need only about 30 minutes simmering time.

TIPS:

* To be honest, it's hard to make pork broth interesting—it just doesn't have that much oomph. Using a roasted bone is a big step toward giving it body and flavor.

* Before making the masa and putting the tamales together, set up a steamer based on how many of the tamales you will be steaming. To cook a small amount—6 to 8 tamales or so—a circular cooling rack or collapsible metal steamer basket set into a deep skillet or Dutch oven with a tight-fitting lid will do. To steam larger amounts, it is helpful to have a large bamboo steamer or a large pot with a steamer insert. Lay the tamales in a row across the bottom of a bamboo steamer. Stack them, if need be, no higher than three layers. For a pot with a steamer insert, stand the tamales up side by side (open ends up, of course!) You can always divide larger amounts of tamales between two steamers if they don't all fit in one.

Achiote Oil

Makes about 4 cup

4 cup olive oil	8 tablespoons achiote (annatto) seeds
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Heat the oil and annatto seeds in a small skillet over medium heat just until the seeds give off a lively, steady sizzle. Don't overheat the mixture or the seeds and oil will both end up discolored and unusable. Once the really get sizzling, remove the pan from the heat and let it stand until the sizzling stops. Strain the oil and discard the seeds. Store the oil for up to 4 days at room temperature in a jar with a tight fitting lid.

Sofrito

Makes about 4 cups

8 medium Spanish onions, cut into large chunks	16 leaves of culantro (see Note)
12 to 16 cubanelle or Italian frying peppers	12 to 16 ripe plum tomatoes, cored and cut into chunks
48 to 80 cloves garlic, peeled	4 large red bell pepper, cored seeded and cut into large chunks
4 large bunch of cilantro	
28 to 40 ajices dulces (see Note)	

Chop the onion and cubanelle or Italian peppers in the work bowl of a food processor until coarsely chopped. With the motor running, add the remaining ingredients one at a time and process until smooth. The sofrito will keep in the refrigerator for up to 3 days. It also freezes beautifully: Spoon it into sealable plastic bags in 1-cup quantities.

Note: Ajices dulces, sometimes called ajicitos are tiny peppers similar in appearance to Habaneros and Scotch Bonnet peppers, but at the other end of the heat scale. They are sweet with a bright green, herbal flavor. Culantro is a leafy herb that smells and tastes like cilantro on steroids. Both ajices dulces and culantro are available in Latin markets. If you cannot find one or both of them, simply leave them out and use 1 ½ bunches of cilantro.



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Mushroom-Plantain-Stuffed Chicken Breast with Mango-Bacon Gravy

30 servings

15 (3 ½-pound) chickens, preferably free-range and/or organic
Kosher or fine sea salt and freshly ground pepper

For the Mango-Bacon Gravy:

60 ounces slab bacon (about 5 - 8 x 2-inch pieces), rind removed, cut into ½-inch cubes (about 10 cups)
5 large onion, halved, then cut into thick slices
20 stalks celery, trimmed and coarsely chopped,
10 medium carrots, peeled and coarsely chopped

15 cloves garlic, coarsely chopped
1-¼ cup all-purpose flour
30 cups homemade or store-bought chicken broth
10 sprigs fresh thyme
5 bay leaf
5 teaspoon black peppercorns
7-½ cups mango nectar (see Note)
10 tablespoons white wine vinegar

10 tablespoons olive oil

Fenneled-Up Brussels Sprouts

Preparation:

1. Make the picadillo and the plantain mash. The picadillo can be made up to 3 days in advance and the plantains can be made up to 1 day in advance.

Prepare and Stuff the Chicken:

2. Rinse the giblets and necks and set them all, except for the livers, aside. Use the livers for another dish or discard them.

3. Feel along the center of the chicken breast to find the thin bone that separates the two breasts. With a thin-bladed knife, cut along one side of this bone and down to the rib bones. Pull the breast meat away from the center bone—so you can get a better look at what you're doing—and, using the tip of the knife, start to separate the breast from the rib bones. Keep going like this, following the curve of the rib bones, until you reach the joint where the wing connects to the breastbones. Cut through the skin along the backbone—but not through the skin that connects the breast to the thighs, (you'll get to that in a minute). When you reach the point where the wing bone connects to the breastbones, bend the wing behind the chicken to give yourself a very clear view of the joint. Cut

through the joint to separate the wing from the breastbone. You now have a skin-on boneless breast with the wing attached that is still attached to the thigh by the skin. Slip your fingertip under the skin of the thigh to separate the skin from the meat. Cut off as much of the skin from the thigh as you can, being sure to leave that skin attached to the skin that covers the breast. Cut off the wing tip and middle joint of the wing, leaving the first joint of the wing attached to the breast. You will now have a boneless chicken breast with a fair amount of extra skin (from the thigh) attached along one edge and the first wing joint attached to the other end. Trim any pieces of fat or cartilage from the breast and repeat with the other breast. When you're finished removing the two breasts, remove the legs by bending them backwards to expose the joint that connect the legs to the backbone. Cut through skin, meat and that joint to remove the legs. Repeat with the remaining chickens. Set the legs and trimmed wing pieces aside for another use. Trim all the fat and skin from the breast/backbones of the three chickens and, with a heavy knife or cleaver, whack the bones into manageable pieces.

Butterfly and stuff the chicken:

4. To butterfly the chicken, start at the wider, long side of the breast and make a horizontal cut almost all the way through the breast stopping just before cutting through the thin side of the breast.

5. Take $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of the plantain mash and shape it into a more or less even roll about 2 inches long. Repeat to make 29 more rolls and set them aside. Open up one of the butterflied chicken breasts with one of the long sides closest to you. Spread $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of the mushrooms over the surface of the meat, leaving about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch border all the way around. Place one of the plantain rolls near the edge of the chicken breast closest to you. Roll up the chicken breast, tucking in the ends as you go to make a neat, compact little bundle. There will be a little skin left on the far side—smooth that into place to cover up the seam and make an even neater bundle. Set the stuffed breast seam side down and tie it at 1-inch intervals with kitchen twine. Do the same for the rest of the breasts and filling. Pat the chicken breasts dry with paper towels. The chicken can be boned a day before cooking them and can be stuffed up to several hours before. Keep them refrigerated.

Make the mango-bacon gravy:

6. Put the bacon cubes in a wide, casserole or braising pan and pour in 1- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup water. Set over high heat and cook until the water is almost evaporated, then reduce the heat to medium-low. (Starting the bacon with a little water helps pull some of the fat out of the bacon. By the time the water evaporates, the bacon will be sizzling gently in its own fat.) Cook until the bacon is lightly browned and the bottom of the pan is shiny with golden bits stuck to it, about 6 minutes. Add the onion, carrot, and celery and cook, stirring often so the vegetables do not stick and brown, until the onion is softened but not brown, about 10 minutes.

7. Add the chicken bones and cook, stirring often, until the bones start to brown and the onions are well browned, about 10 minutes. Poke around the bottom of the skillet as you stir to make sure the bones or vegetables aren't sticking and burning as they cook. Sprinkle the flour over the bones and vegetables and stir until you can't see any traces of white. Pour in the broth and add the thyme, bay leaves, and peppercorns. Bring to a boil, stirring up the little brown bits that stuck to the pan. Adjust the heat so the sauce is simmering and stir in the mango nectar and vinegar. Cook until the sauce is lightly thickened, smooth and a rich brown, about 45 minutes. Stir occasionally to prevent sticking, especially in the corners of the pan. Strain the gravy through a very fine sieve. The gravy can be held at room temperature for up to 2 hours or refrigerated for up to 3 days. In either case, reheat the gravy over low heat, adding water a spoonful at a time to return it to its original thickness.

Cook the chicken and assemble the plates:

8. About 30 minutes before you're ready to serve the chicken, preheat the oven to 400 F. When it reaches temperature, heat 2 tablespoons olive oil in each of 5 large, heavy, oven-proof non-stick skillets over medium high heat. Be sure the chicken breasts are dry and slide them carefully into the oil. Cook, turning as necessary, until they're beautifully browned on all sides, about 10 minutes. Pop the whole pan into the oven and cook until the chicken is cooked through and the filling is warmed, about 20 minutes. (The best way to check is to use an instant reading thermometer. The temperature at the very center of the stuffing should reach 150 F.)

9. Let the chicken breasts rest for about 5 minutes. Meanwhile, prepare (or reheat) the Brussels sprouts and make sure the gravy is hot.

10. To serve: Snip the twine off the chicken breasts. Slice the breasts on a diagonal into 4 or 5 slices each. Arrange the slices overlapping along one side of the plate. Spoon some Brussels sprouts onto the other side of the plate. Ladle enough gravy over the sliced chicken to nap it and form a little pool on the plate. Serve immediately.

Note: Mango nectar is a pulpy juice extracted from fresh mangoes. It is available fresh in some Latin and health food stores or in bottles or aseptic packages in many supermarkets.

Mushroom Picadillo

Makes 7 loosely packed cups

5 (14-ounce) package white mushrooms 10 tablespoons olive oil 10 small shallots, peeled and finely chopped	Kosher or fine sea salt Freshly ground black pepper 10 Lemons - juiced
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11. Wipe the mushroom caps clean with a damp paper towel. Cut the caps in half and then slice them thin. Chop them fine by rocking your knife back and forth over them, a little mound at a time. You'll have about 40 cups. This is a labor of love. You may be tempted to chop the mushrooms in a food processor but that would make them mushy and you won't end up with the nicely browned, pebbly texture of hand-chopped mushrooms.

12. Heat the oil in several large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the shallots and cook, stirring, until they're softened, about 3 minutes. Add the mushrooms and stir until they give up enough liquid to coat the bottom of the pan. Reduce the heat to medium-low and cook until all the liquid is evaporated and the tiny pieces of mushroom are separate, almost fluffy. Season with salt and pepper and enough lemon juice to give it a lively zing. The picadillo will keep in the refrigerator for up to 4 days or up to 2 months in the freezer.

Ripe Plantain Mash (Not-Quite-Mofongo)

Makes about 12 cups

12 medium plantains (see Notes), peeled and cut into 3 pieces each	Kosher or fine sea salt 8 tablespoons butter
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1. Put the plantains in a medium saucepan and add enough water to cover by a couple of inches. Add a rounded teaspoon of salt and bring to a boil over high heat. Adjust the heat so the water is simmering. Cook until you can pierce the plantain easily with a paring knife but there is still some texture, about 6 minutes.

2. Drain the plantains and let them air-dry for a few minutes. Put them in a food processor along with the butter and 8 tablespoons water. Process, using very quick on/off pulses, just until the smaller pieces of plantains are starting to become smooth. The texture should be very coarse and you should still be able to see pieces of plantain in the mash. Scrape into a bowl and season to taste with salt and pepper. Serve hot.

Note: The skin of the plantains should be mostly black with some speckling of yellow. The flesh should have some give when you press with your thumb.

Fenneled-Up Brussels Sprouts

Makes 30 servings

Ten (10-ounce) containers or 1 ¼ pounds loose Brussels sprouts	5 teaspoon fennel seeds
10 tablespoons olive oil	Kosher or fine sea salt and freshly ground pepper

3. Trim the little stalks off the end of each sprout. Cut the sprouts in half, then cut the halves—flat side down so they stay steady—into thin (about 1/8 inch) shreds. You will have about 35 cups shredded sprouts.

4. Heat the oil in several large heavy pans over medium-high heat. Add the fennel seeds and cook just until they smell wonderful and are sizzling. Stir in the sprouts and cook, tossing and stirring the sprouts, until they are wilted down, bright green and softened, about 4 minutes. Pull the pan from the heat and season with salt and pepper to taste. Serve hot.



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Boriqua Sunset

30 servings

For the Panna Cotta:

2 cup sugar

4 tablespoon gelatin

8 tablespoons water

6 cup mango puree (see Note below)

2 cup passion fruit puree (see Note, page 000)

8 cups heavy cream

For the Raspberry Sauce (makes about 4 cup):

Four 10-ounce bag frozen raspberries

8 to 12 tablespoons sugar

Juice of 2 limes, or as needed

Preparation:

1. Make the panna cotta: Heat 3 cups water and the sugar in a small saucepan over medium heat, stirring, until the sugar is dissolved and the syrup is boiling. Remove from the heat.
2. Sprinkle the gelatin over 1 cup cool water in a small bowl. Let stand until softened, then stir the gelatin mixture into the sugar syrup until the gelatin is completely dissolved. Cool to room temperature.
3. Stir the mango puree, passion fruit puree, and heavy cream together in a large bowl. Stir in the gelatin mixture thoroughly. Divide the mixture among 30 6-ounce ramekins or custard cups. Set the filled cups on a tray, cover them all with plastic wrap and chill until completely set, at least 4 hours. The panna cotta may be made up to a day in advance.
4. Make the sauce: Heat the raspberries, sugar, and 1 cup water in a small saucepan until simmering and the sugar is dissolved. Pass the mixture through a fine sieve into a small bowl, scraping the fruit with the back of a spoon to pass as much sauce through while keeping the seeds and pulp behind. Stir in lime juice to taste.
5. To serve, invert each ramekin or custard cup over a dessert plate. Wait a few seconds and the panna cotta will slip right out and onto the plate. Spoon some of the raspberry sauce around each serving and pass the remaining sauce separately.