

**From Truly Mexican**



**Lamb Adobo Enchiladas with Cooked Green Salsa**  
**Enchiladas de Borrego Adobado con Salsa Verde Cocida**

Makes: 8 enchiladas

Active time: 20 minutes (not including making lamb or green salsa)

Start to finish: 40 minutes (not including making lamb or green salsa)

**Ingredients**

2 cups shredded leftover Lamb Shanks Braised in Parchment (recipe follows), including ½ cup adobo sauce, or any other meat cooked in adobo

1½ cups Cooked Green Salsa (recipe follows)

2 to 4 tablespoons mild olive oil or vegetable oil

Chicken stock or water, if necessary

8 corn tortillas, homemade or store-bought

#### Garnish

¼ cup Mexican crema, crème fraîche, or sour cream, thinned slightly with water, if necessary, for drizzling

¼ cup grated queso fresco or ricotta salata

¼ cup finely chopped white onion

¼ cup chopped cilantro

#### Instructions

Preheat the oven to 300°F.

Warm the shredded lamb in the adobo sauce in a small heavy saucepan over medium-low heat, about 15 minutes, or in a small baking dish covered with foil in the oven for 20 to 30 minutes.

Meanwhile, heat the salsa in another saucepan over medium-low heat until heated through, adding some chicken stock or water, if necessary, to maintain a velvety consistency that is thick enough to coat a wooden spoon, but not gloppy.

Soften the tortillas in oil, then fill them with the lamb mixture. Arrange them next to each other in a baking pan or a heatproof serving dish and reheat them in the oven for 10 minutes.

Transfer 2 rolled, filled tortillas to each of 4 plates (or keep them in the serving dish) and spoon the salsa generously over them. Drizzle with the crema, and top with the cheese, onion, and cilantro.

Serve them with rice, beans, or any other side you like.

These enchiladas can be assembled in a baking dish (before you top them with the salsa) up to four hours ahead and kept covered with plastic wrap in the refrigerator once they're cool.

Cover the enchiladas with foil and reheat them in a 350°F oven for about 20 minutes, and then spoon the warm salsa over them before garnishing and serving.

#### Lamb Shanks Braised In Parchment

##### Mixiote De Borrego

I have fond memories of driving from Mexico City to my family's country house and getting uncontrollably hungry whenever we came to a certain group of ladies selling *mixiotes*. The word originally meant the thin-as parchment skin of the maguey plant (a colossal succulent that you see just about everywhere in Mexico), but came to refer to the delicious meats braised inside maguey-skin packages. Today, the use of the skins has been banned after its popularity threatened the survival of the maguey plant, but cooks substitute parchment paper for the mixiote. My dear friend Josephina Howard turned me on to the concept of using whole lamb

shanks instead of the small pieces of meat you'd find in Mexico. The result is fantastic, makes a stunning presentation, and still takes me back to those country roads.

Serves: 4 generously

Active time: 1 hour (includes making the adobo)

Start to finish: 4 hours (includes making the adobo)

### **Ingredients**

8 avocado leaves, either fresh or dried

4 (14- to 16-ounce) lamb shanks

1 teaspoon fine salt, or 2 teaspoons kosher salt

2 cups Pasilla-Guajillo Adobo (recipe follows)

8 (15 × 30-inch) pieces parchment paper

4 cotton strings

### **Instructions**

Heat a comal, griddle, or heavy skillet over medium-low heat, and toast the avocado leaves, a few at a time, turning frequently with tongs, until lightly browned and fragrant, 1 to 2 minutes.

Pat the lamb dry and season it with the salt.

Arrange two pieces of parchment on top of each other so that they form a cross. Holding the bone with one hand, stand a lamb shank in the middle, pour ½ cup of adobo over the meaty part (keep the bone clean), and rest 2 whole avocado leaves against the shank. Gather the parchment up around the bone with the other hand, then tie the top with string to close the parchment around the bone. Repeat with the remaining lamb shanks, adobo sauce, and avocado leaves.

Bring about 1 inch of water to a boil in the bottom of a deep steamer pot (a pasta pot with a deep steamer insert works well) and arrange the lamb packages, standing up, in the deep steamer basket. Cover and steam over the boiling water, adding more boiling water as necessary, until the lamb is so tender that it's falling off the bone, 2½ to 3 hours. Because you're steaming for such a long time, use this trick to tell when you need to add more water: Put a clean coin in the boiling water. As long as there's water left, you'll hear the coin jiggle. If it stops, it's time to add more water.

Serve the lamb shanks in the packages and let your guests open them, or open them yourself and serve them in large bowls.

Serve it with corn tortillas, rice, beans, or any other side dish you like. Or turn it into tacos, enchiladas, or tamales. You can prepare the packages a day ahead and keep them in the refrigerator until you're ready to cook them. Cooked lamb shanks in adobo keep in the refrigerator for up to three days or in the freezer for up to one month.

## **Pasilla-Guajillo Adobo**

### **Adobo de Pasilla y Guajillo**

Introducing a second chile into the mix takes just a few extra minutes, but rewards you by providing a well-rounded, sophisticated flavor. A splash of beer adds serious depth. Pasillas and guajillos go beautifully together, but once you get the hang of adobos, you'll find yourself experimenting with other combinations as well. Perhaps you'll do what my mom does, peeking into the cupboard, grabbing a few bags of whatever chiles you've had around for a while, and whipping up something incredible.

Makes: 3 cups

Active time: 30 minutes

Start to finish: 1 hour

### **Ingredients**

2 ounces pasilla chiles (6), wiped clean, stemmed, slit open, seeded, and deveined

2 ounces guajillo chiles (8), wiped clean, stemmed, slit open, seeded, and deveined

¼ cup distilled white vinegar

¼ cup light Mexican beer

½ cup chopped white onion

4 garlic cloves, peeled

1 teaspoon fine salt, or 2 teaspoons kosher salt

½ teaspoon dried oregano, preferably Mexican

¼ teaspoon cumin seeds

5 whole cloves

### **Instructions**

Heat a comal, griddle, or heavy skillet over medium-low heat, and toast the chiles 2 or 3 at a time, turning them over and pressing down on them with tongs frequently, until the chiles are fragrant, about 1 minute per batch. Soak the chiles in enough cold water to cover until they're soft, about 30 minutes. Drain and discard the soaking water.

Put the vinegar and beer in the blender jar with the chiles and the remaining ingredients. Blend until smooth, at least 3 minutes, adding a little water if necessary to puree. If you like a silky, smooth texture, strain the adobo through a medium-mesh sieve.

Now you can use this highly flavored puree as a marinade for seafood and meat. Or turn it into a fabulous cooking liquid or sauce for eggs, beans, and enchiladas.

This adobo keeps in the refrigerator for up to five days or in the freezer for up to one month.

## **Cooked Green Salsa**

### **Salsa Verde Cocida**

This versatile cooking salsa has a mouth-puckering tang and spicy zip that makes it a great foil for rich meats like pork. It also turns eggs into fabulous huevos rancheros and is a great partner for tortillas—either chilaquiles or enchiladas.

Makes: 4 cups

Active time: 20 minutes

Start to finish: 1 hour

### **Ingredients**

2 pounds tomatillos (20 to 24), husked and rinsed

2 fresh jalapeño chiles, stemmed

3 small garlic cloves, peeled

1 teaspoon fine salt, or 2 teaspoons kosher salt

1 teaspoon ground cumin

½ cup chopped cilantro

1 tablespoon mild olive oil or vegetable oil

Put the tomatillos and jalapeños in a 4- to 5-quart heavy pot with enough water to cover and bring the water to a simmer. Lower the heat and simmer gently, turning the tomatillos and chiles occasionally, until the tomatillos have turned a khaki-green color and are tender, but still intact, about 15 minutes. If necessary, let the tomatillos stand in the pan off the heat for up to 15 minutes more to finish cooking the insides.

Gently drain the tomatillos and chiles in a colander, being careful to keep the tomatillos intact. Put the tomatillos, jalapeños, garlic, salt, and cumin in the blender jar and pulse just until the tomatillos are coarsely chopped. Add the cilantro and blend until the sauce is smooth and flecked with cilantro (the tomatillo seeds should still be visible). Be careful when you're blending hot ingredients: Cover the top with a kitchen towel, and hold the top firmly in place with your hand. Work in batches to avoid blending with a full jar.

Wipe the pot clean and heat the oil in the pot over medium heat until it shimmers. Carefully pour the salsa into the oil (it may splatter), and bring it to a simmer. As it's simmering, swish a little water around in the jar and add it to the pot. Simmer gently until slightly thickened, about 10 minutes. Transfer the salsa to a heatproof 4-cup measure, and add water (if necessary) until the salsa measures 4 cups but is still thick enough to coat the back of a spoon. Season to taste with additional salt.

This salsa keeps in the refrigerator for up to three days or in the freezer for up to one month.