

# Tex-Mex With Flair

If you ever find yourself just west of Austin, where the city meets the Hill Country, stop into Hudson's on the Bend restaurant ([www.hudsonsonthebend.com](http://www.hudsonsonthebend.com)). There you'll find food by Chef Jeff Blank that is rooted in Texas but fused with ingredients and techniques from many cultures, a process not unlike that which gave us our beloved Tex-Mex in the first place.

Tex-Mex may have had a negative connotation at one time, but today we recognize it as a unique cuisine that developed as the cultures crossed the border over and over again. It's neither Southern cooking, nor Mexican cooking, but a blend of the two that became something totally different.

Although Chef Blank's cooking is influenced by many cuisines, the most prevalent come from that borderland between Texan and Mexican foods. In his second cookbook, *Fired Up!*, he delivers dishes with exciting flavor combinations like Green Chile Corn Pudding and Dos Gringos Tamales With Strawberry Raspberry Sauce.

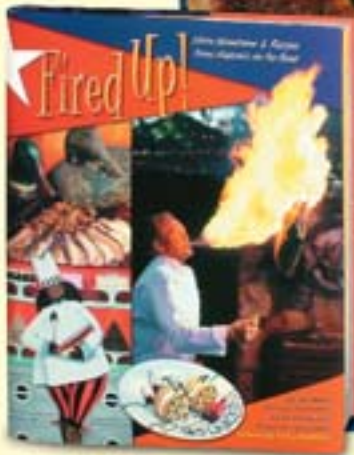
The energy in the title is carried throughout the book, from the recipes to the artwork. Adding the hot zing of peppers in unexpected places is one of the ways Chef Blank puts a spin on his dishes. Below we've included the recipe for one of our favorites in this vein, Way South of the Border Ancho Pepper Pecan Pie. A true Tex-Mex original, it combines the sweet, mellow flavor of Texas pecan pie with the Mexican pop of hot pepper. Together they smolder and satisfy.

## Way South of the Border Ancho Pepper Pecan Pie

1 deep-dish pie shell (9 inches)  
from the dairy case in your grocery store  
7 egg yolks



LAURIE SMITH



- 1/2 cup light corn syrup
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1/2 cup unsweetened cocoa
- 1 cup dark brown sugar, firmly packed
- 1/2 stick butter, melted
- 3 cups Southern Comfort bourbon
- 2 cups pecan halves
- 1 cup ancho pepper purée\*
- 1 pinch salt
- 4 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 2 tablespoons vanilla bean paste (or vanilla extract)

Preheat oven to 300 degrees. In saucepan, over high heat, reduce Southern Comfort to 1/4 cup. (Caution: When heating alcohol, a 3-foot flame can result.)

In sauté pan, add both sugars and corn syrup and bring to a boil. Add the reduced Southern Comfort, ancho purée, cocoa, salt, vanilla and butter to

the boiling sugars and continue to boil.

Whisk egg yolks in a bowl. Slowly add the bubbling sugar mixture to eggs. Do this very slowly, adding just a small amount at a time, as you will scramble the eggs if done too quickly. Remove from heat and whisk in flour. Place pecan halves in pie shell. Pour filling into pie shell. Place on a sheet tray and bake for 40 minutes at 300 degrees. Serves 8 to 10.

Timing: This should be made at least 6 hours ahead of time so it has time to gel and cool.

\* To make ancho purée, seed and de-stem 8 to 10 ancho peppers, then soak them in hot water for 30 minutes or until soft. Puree in blender. Leftover puree may be stored in refrigerator for up to 6 weeks or frozen for later use.

Our readers' enthusiasm for Tex-Mex is contagious. We sat around the testing table, debating the merits of one recipe over another, discussing ingredients, comparing and contrasting the dishes before us to our families' Tex-Mex favorites. As Texans, we understand the intricacies of really good Tex-Mex:

- Spicy, but not so hot you can't taste anything else.
- Cheesy, whether cheddar, Monterey jack or "yellow cheese."
- A little bit of grease—don't fight it.
- Fresh flavors like cilantro, lime and raw onion.

Put it all together and you've got great dishes that combine the best of Texas with the best of Mexico.

**JERRY GOODWIN**, a member of Wood County Electric Cooperative, knows just how to combine these flavors in his Tex-Mex Posole Stew. He writes, "Experiment and make it as hot as you like. Serve with corn tortilla chips or hot flour tortillas with butter, and iced tea or margaritas." He also says to try it for breakfast sometime.

### Tex-Mex Posole Stew

1 small (1½- to 2-pound)  
pork tenderloin or pork roast

2 cans (14 ounces each) chicken broth  
2 stalks celery, diced large  
4 cloves garlic, diced  
1 tablespoon crushed red pepper  
1 large onion, diced (divided)  
2 cans (15.5 ounces each) yellow hominy  
3 cans (4 ounces each) diced green chilies  
Pinch oregano  
1 bunch cilantro, chopped (divided)  
4 corn tortillas, torn into pieces  
1 tablespoon ground cumin  
1 tablespoon cayenne pepper  
Salt and pepper to taste  
Sharp cheddar cheese, shredded  
3-4 limes, cut in wedges

In slow cooker, combine pork with chicken broth, celery, garlic, red pepper and half of diced onion. Cook on high setting for 5 to 6 hours or until pork is done and can be shredded. Add water as needed to keep pork in plenty of liquid while cooking. Do not let it dry out.

In slow cooker, shred cooked pork using two forks. Add hominy with its liquid, green chilies, oregano, ½ cup cilantro, corn tortilla pieces, cumin, cayenne pepper, and salt and pepper to taste. Mix all ingredients well and cook for another 1 to 1½ hours. Add water as needed to keep mixture soupy but thick.

Serve the posole hot in bowls

along with separate platter of onion, cilantro, cheese and lime wedges so guests may add ingredients to their own taste. Serves 6 to 8.

Serving size: 1 bowl. Per serving: 334 calories, 22 grams protein, 14 grams fat, 30 grams carbohydrates, 1,122 milligrams sodium, 57 milligrams cholesterol

### Green Sauce

3 medium green tomatoes, chopped  
4 tomatillos, husks removed and chopped  
1-2 jalapeños  
3 avocados  
2 cloves garlic  
Salt to taste  
1½ cups sour cream  
3-4 sprigs cilantro

In saucepan, place tomatoes, tomatillos, jalapeños and enough water to cover. Bring to boil and reduce heat, simmer for 10 minutes, drain. Process tomatoes, tomatillos, jalapeños, avocados, garlic and salt in blender until blended. Pour into serving dish and stir in sour cream. Chill, covered, until ready to serve. Serves 12 to 14 as a dip.

Serving size: ¼ cup. Per serving: 135 calories, 2 grams protein, 12 grams fat, 7 grams carbohydrates, 175 milligrams sodium, 11 milligrams cholesterol

**DEBBIE MASTERSON**

Rusk County Electric Cooperative



WILL VAN OVERBEEK

**Sour Cream Chicken Enchilada Casserole**

- 1 can (14 ounces) chicken broth
- 1 can (14 ounces) cream of chicken soup
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 1 can (4 ounces) diced green chilies
- 1 carton (8 ounces) sour cream
- 10 corn tortillas, torn into quarters
- 2½ cups chopped, cooked chicken
- 1 package (8 ounces) shredded cheddar cheese
- Sliced green onion and chopped tomatoes

In large saucepan, stir together chicken broth, cream of chicken soup, onion and green chilies. Bring to boil, reduce heat, and cover and simmer for 30 minutes. Stir in sour cream. Alternate layers of tortillas, chopped chicken, soup mixture and

cheese in a 12x7x2-inch baking dish. Bake uncovered at 325 degrees for 30 minutes. Garnish with sliced green onions and tomatoes. Serves 6 to 8.

Serving size: 1 square. Per serving: 349 calories, 25 grams protein, 19 grams fat, 20 grams carbohydrates, 574 milligrams sodium, 81 milligrams cholesterol

CELIA GIVAS, CoServ Electric

**Easy Mexican Rice With Pork**

- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 stalk celery, chopped
- 1 cup white rice (uncooked)
- 1 can (15 ounces) Rotel
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- 1½ teaspoons salt
- 1 teaspoon dry mustard

2 pounds chopped, cooked pork

In saucepan, sauté onion and celery. Add rice, Rotel, 2 cups water, brown sugar, salt and mustard. Add pork. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer for 20 to 25 minutes. Serves 6 to 8.

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Some testers thought it was too sweet, though many liked it as is. You may want to halve the brown sugar the first time you make it and see what you think.

Serving size: 1 large serving spoonful. Per serving: 279 calories, 19 grams protein, 11 grams fat, 25 grams carbohydrates, 463 milligrams sodium, 56 milligrams cholesterol

BARBARA FLYNN

Hamilton County Electric Cooperative

CONGRATULATIONS, ANNA!



RICK PATRICK

An excited murmur went around the office as we learned that the winner of the *Texas Co-op Power* Holiday Baking Contest (December 2005) also had won the 2006 Pillsbury Bake-Off ... and \$1 million! **ANNA GINSBERG**, a member of Pedernales Electric Cooperative, won the national contest for her Baked Chicken and Spinach Stuffing. *Texas Co-op Power* congratulates Anna and wishes her continued success in her cooking!

TEXAS CO-OP POWER  
*Holiday Recipe Contest*  
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We're looking for the best recipes from your holiday celebrations. All recipes must be original and the ingredients must include Pioneer Brand Gravy Mix, Pioneer Brand Biscuit & Baking Mix, or Pioneer Brand Frozen Biscuit or Roll Dough. Winners will be announced in our December issue.

Up to three entries are allowed per person. Each should be submitted on a separate piece of paper and include your name, address and phone number, plus the name of your electric cooperative. All entries must be postmarked by September 8, 2006. Send entries to Holiday Recipe Contest, 2550 S. IH-35, Austin, TX 78704, or fax to (512) 486-6254. To enter by e-mail (recipes@texas-ec.org), you must include "Holiday Recipe Contest" in the subject line and submit one recipe per e-mail (no attachments). For official rules, visit [www.texascoopower.com](http://www.texascoopower.com) or send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to the address above.



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