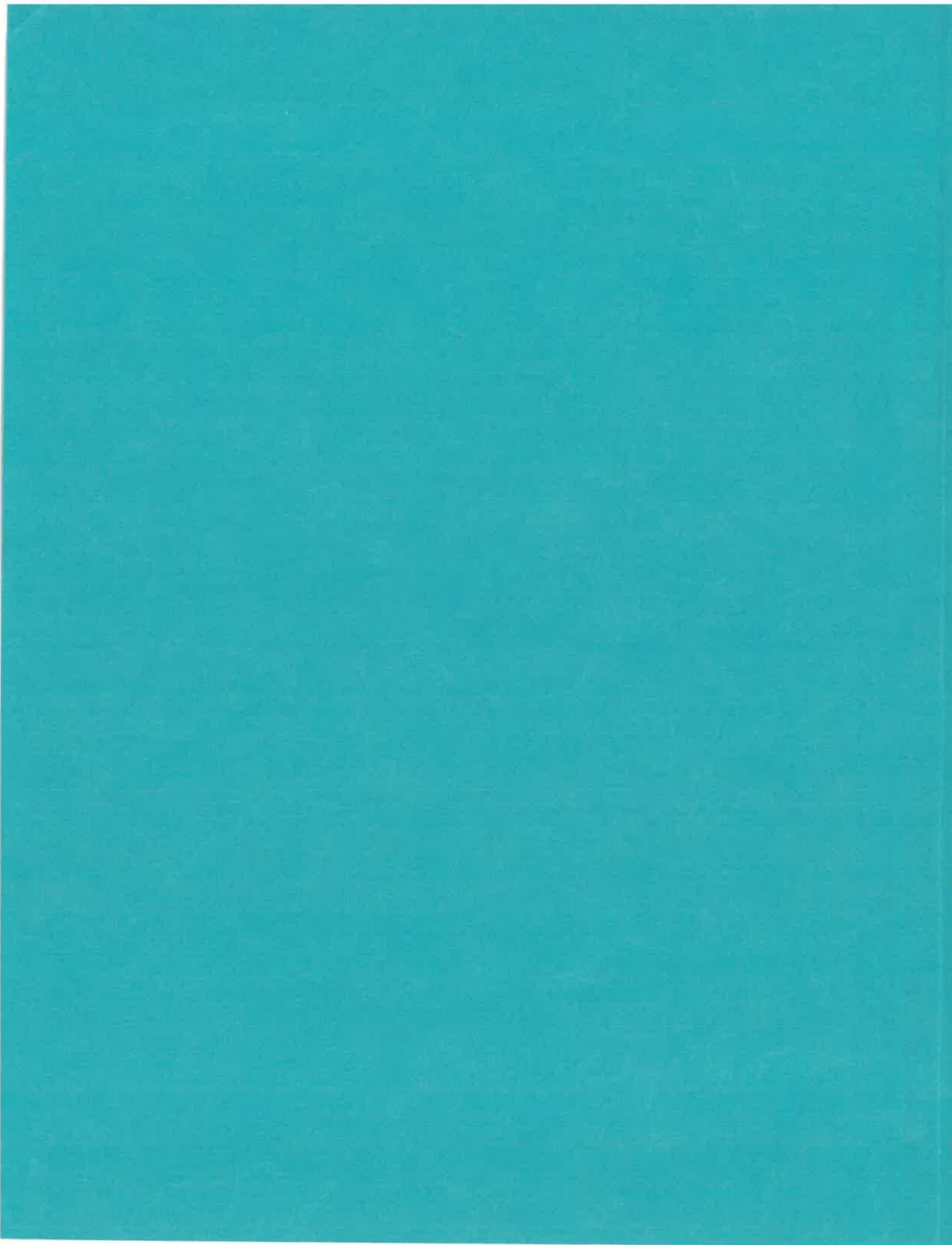
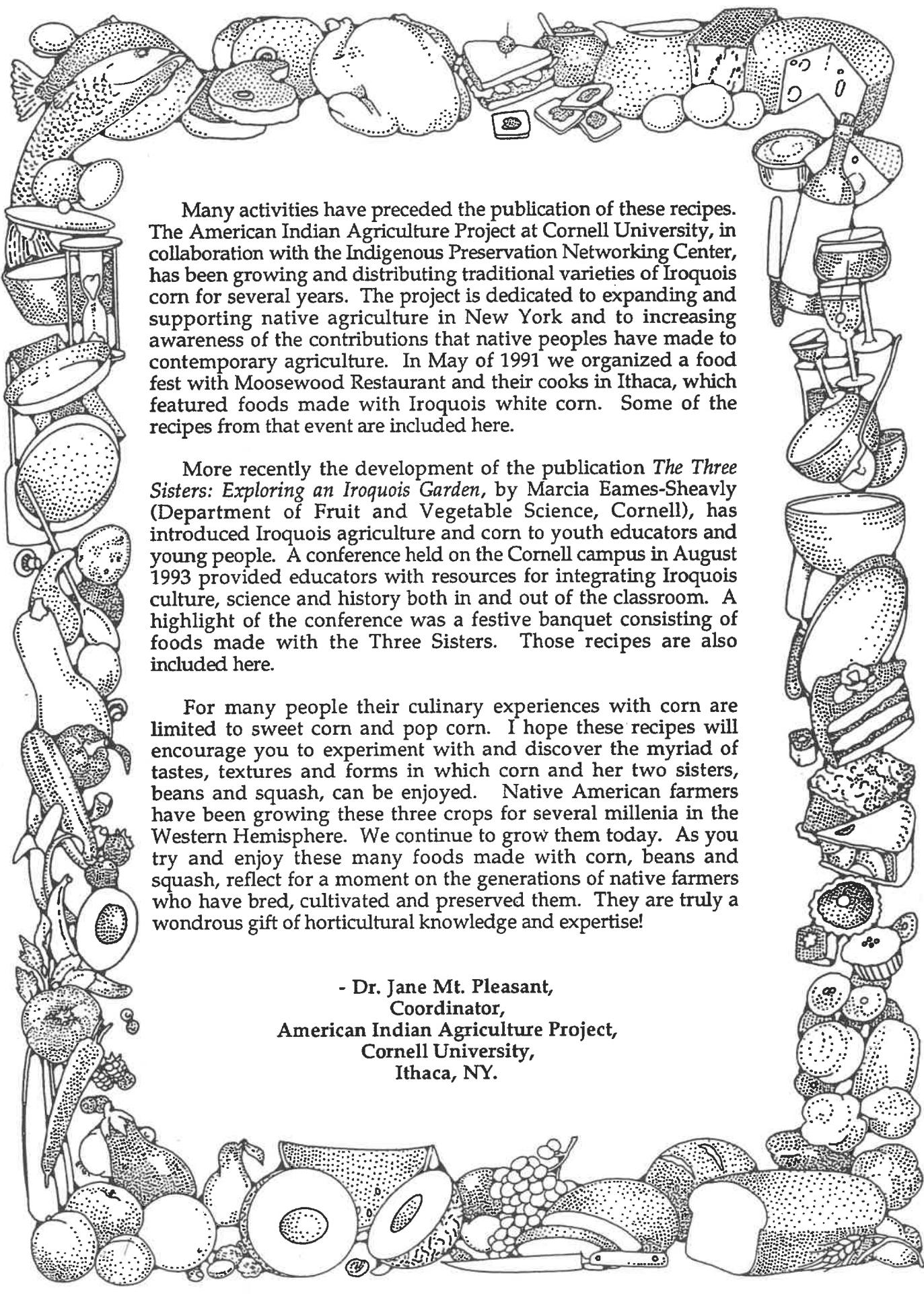


COOKING WITH THE THREE SISTERS







Many activities have preceded the publication of these recipes. The American Indian Agriculture Project at Cornell University, in collaboration with the Indigenous Preservation Networking Center, has been growing and distributing traditional varieties of Iroquois corn for several years. The project is dedicated to expanding and supporting native agriculture in New York and to increasing awareness of the contributions that native peoples have made to contemporary agriculture. In May of 1991 we organized a food fest with Moosewood Restaurant and their cooks in Ithaca, which featured foods made with Iroquois white corn. Some of the recipes from that event are included here.

More recently the development of the publication *The Three Sisters: Exploring an Iroquois Garden*, by Marcia Eames-Sheavly (Department of Fruit and Vegetable Science, Cornell), has introduced Iroquois agriculture and corn to youth educators and young people. A conference held on the Cornell campus in August 1993 provided educators with resources for integrating Iroquois culture, science and history both in and out of the classroom. A highlight of the conference was a festive banquet consisting of foods made with the Three Sisters. Those recipes are also included here.

For many people their culinary experiences with corn are limited to sweet corn and pop corn. I hope these recipes will encourage you to experiment with and discover the myriad of tastes, textures and forms in which corn and her two sisters, beans and squash, can be enjoyed. Native American farmers have been growing these three crops for several millenia in the Western Hemisphere. We continue to grow them today. As you try and enjoy these many foods made with corn, beans and squash, reflect for a moment on the generations of native farmers who have bred, cultivated and preserved them. They are truly a wondrous gift of horticultural knowledge and expertise!

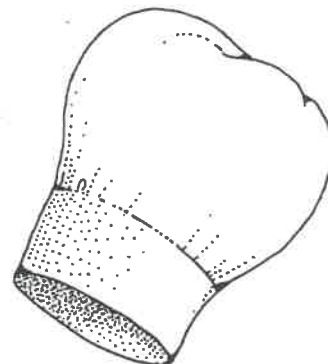
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Publication and Corn available from:

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Cornell University
7 Business and Technology Park
Ithaca, NY

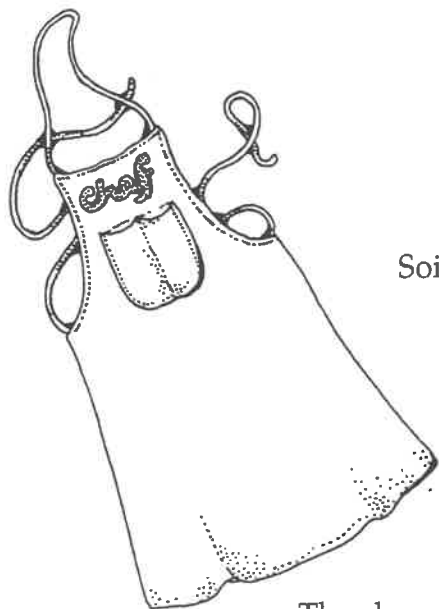
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Thanks to the following people for their thoughtful review:

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COOKING WITH THE THREE SISTERS, F&VS REPORT# 45

Note: we will use the following abbreviations

C = cup
tsp = teaspoon
T = tablespoon
lb = pound
oz = ounce

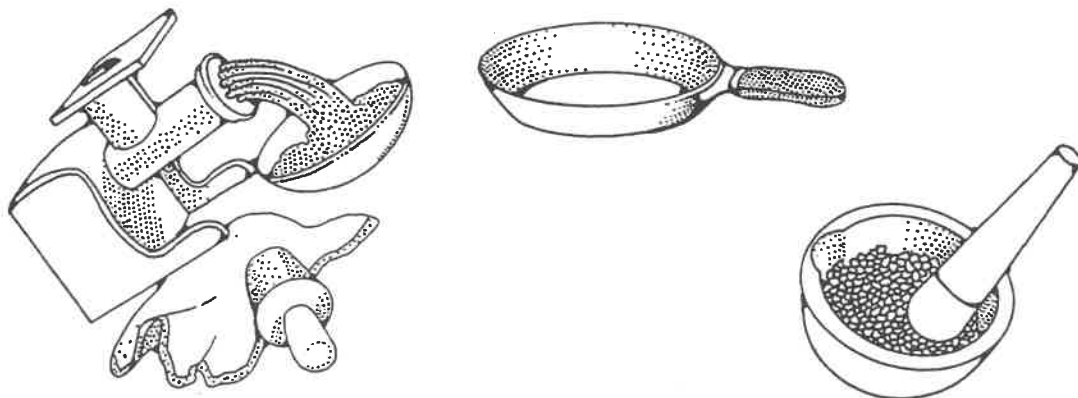
Most recipes make about 4 to 6 servings unless otherwise indicated.



ROAST CORN

Several of the following recipes call for ground roast corn. Dried Iroquois white flour corn that you may have grown in your garden roasts nicely; you can try using a dent or flint corn, but you'll get a different ground result. To roast corn, use a heavy frying pan, preferably cast-iron. You may want to lightly oil the pan, although this isn't necessary. Place corn in the frying pan, adding no more than an inch of kernels. Heat to medium-low, and slowly roast the kernels, stirring often. If the heat is too high, the kernels may explode or blacken too quickly. Roasting the corn should take awhile - count on 1/2 hour or so. When you're finished, all of the kernels should be evenly golden-brown. Try one; they should be crispy and good tasting, too!

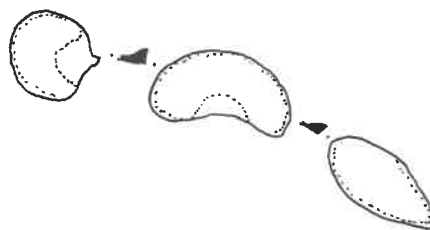
To grind corn, use a hand-cranked grain mill, or if you're ambitious, a mortar and pestle. Your blender will work, but it may grind unevenly, and may cause a lot of wear and tear on the appliance. Coffee grinders are good for grinding small amounts.



SNACKS

THREE SISTERS ROAST SEED SNACK

whole kernel corn
soy beans
pumpkin seeds
salt to taste
optional: dash of garlic powder



Place a small amount of oil in a heavy frying pan - just enough to coat the bottom. If you like the taste, garlic may be added to the oil. Heat to medium-high. Add corn and stir constantly; after several minutes, reduce heat to medium. Stir kernels until golden, and remove from pan. (Remember not to heat too high, or kernels will explode). Follow the same procedure with the soy beans; repeat with the pumpkin seeds. Mix all of the seeds together, and add salt if desired.

My Notes:

CORN TORTILLAS

1 1/2 C freshly ground corn flour (or commercial masa harina)
1/2 C cornmeal
1 1/2 T cooking oil
1 1/3 C warm water
peanut oil (or other cooking oil) to cover bottom of frying pan

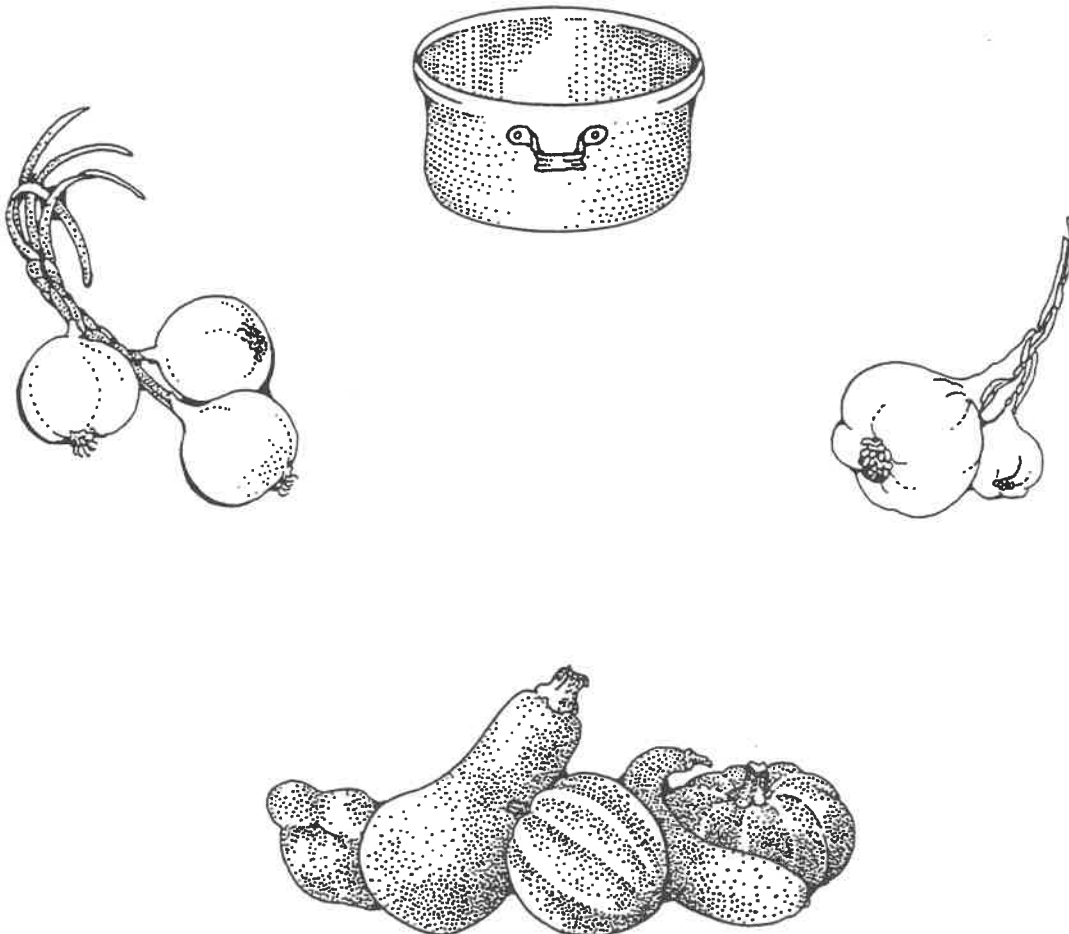
Mix together the first three ingredients, then add the water slowly while stirring until the mixture is "just right," which is not too wet and sticky, yet not too dry and crumbly. Let the mixture rest, covered, for several minutes. Drop by tablespoons onto waxed paper, and roll out until very thin. Cut into triangles for chips, and fry over medium heat in oil until lightly browned on each side. (Or, fry whole to use for tostadas or enchiladas.) Drain chips on paper towel, and very lightly salt. Enjoy with bean dip.

BEAN DIP

1lb pinto beans
6 cloves garlic
2 medium-sized onions
coriander or cilantro to taste
1 T cumin
dash cayenne pepper
salt to taste
1 pint sour cream or
1/2 pint sour cream and 1/2 pint plain yogurt
oil to cover bottom of pan

Soak the beans in water in a heavy sauce pan overnight. Drain in the morning, and cover with fresh water. Bring to a boil and simmer until tender. In a frying pan, sauté onions and garlic. Add beans and spices, mashing the beans as they cook. After thoroughly cooked and mashed, remove from heat. Pureé in a blender and add the sour cream. Hollow out a pumpkin, and fill with dip. Serve with corn chips. Or, place in a serving dish and enjoy with your favorite "munch" - fresh vegetables, chips, etc.

Note: This recipe can be varied in many ways by using different beans and spices. Chopped peppers and tomatoes can be added for a different flavor.



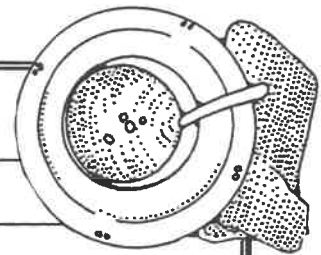
BREAKFASTS AND BREADS

CORN CEREAL

3 C finely ground roast corn
4 C boiling water

In a saucepan, slowly whisk water into ground roast corn until you reach a desired thickness. (If you like, you can leave the cereal relatively thick and add milk in the bowl). Cook over very low heat for 5-7 minutes. Serve with brown sugar, maple syrup or fruit.

My Notes:



SCRAPPLE

Squares of crisp scrapple make a good side dish for eggs or fish.

4 C boiling water
1 1/2 C cornmeal*
2 T chili peppers, finely chopped**

Mix all three ingredients together and pour into a pie dish or cookie pan; it should be about 1/2 inch thick. Set aside for about 1 hour. Cut into squares, and lightly fry in a small amount of butter till golden on each side.

* You may use cornmeal that is made from ground roasted corn if you prefer the flavor

** If you do not have fresh peppers, these are available canned

GARLICKY BLUE CORNSTICKS

These cornsticks are best - and most fun! - when baked in heavy cast-iron cornstick molds. You can also make the recipe in loaf form. Makes about 1 1/2 dozen cornsticks.

1 1/2 C blue cornmeal
3/4 C unbleached white flour or
1/2 C unbleached white flour and 1/4 C whole wheat flour
3 T sugar
1/2 tsp salt
1 tsp baking powder
3 large eggs
6 T unsalted butter, melted
6 T shortening, melted
1 1/4 C milk
2 mild green chiles, seeded and minced (available canned)
2 garlic cloves, minced
1 tsp ground coriander
Oil or melted butter, for brushing

Preheat the oven to 400° F. Place a cast-iron cornstick mold in the oven to heat.

In a large bowl, sift together the first five ingredients. In a medium bowl, lightly beat the eggs; add the melted butter, shortening and milk. Add this mixture to the dry ingredients, along with the peppers, garlic and coriander. Stir just to blend; do not overmix, or cornsticks will be dry and tough!

Remove the hot mold from the oven and brush with oil. Spoon about 2 tablespoons of the batter into each mold and bake in the middle of the oven for 20 to 25 minutes, until the cornsticks are golden brown around the edges and on the bottom. Turn out onto a rack to cool. Repeat with the remaining batter.

My Notes:



CORNMEAL BLUEBERRY MUFFINS (15 - 20 muffins)

- 1 C cornmeal
1 C unbleached white flour or
1/2 C unbleached white flour and 1/2 C whole wheat flour
1/4 C sugar
3 tsp baking powder
1/4 tsp salt
2 large eggs
1 C milk
1/4 C cooking oil
8 oz frozen or fresh blueberries

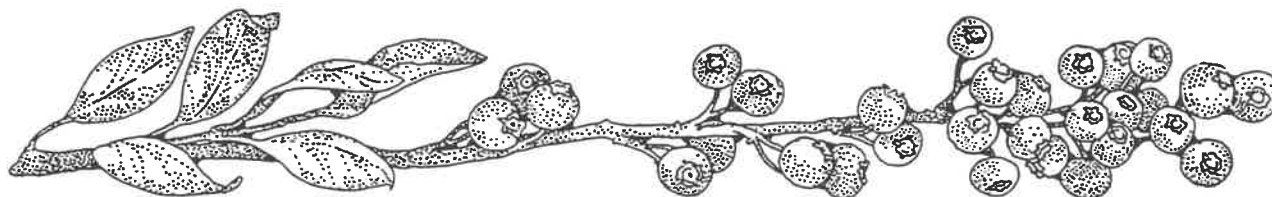
Grease muffin cups, or use paper liners. Preheat oven to 375° F.

In a large bowl, stir together dry ingredients. Set aside. In a small bowl, beat eggs until lemony; stir in milk and oil. Add egg mixture to the dry ingredients, and lightly mix just until blended; do not overbeat! Gently fold in blueberries. Fill prepared muffin cups 2/3 full. Sprinkle each muffin with topping, if you like. Bake for 15 minutes or until nicely browned. Serve warm or cold.

Optional topping:

- 1/3 C unbleached white flour
1/4 C brown sugar
2 T butter

Mix ingredients until crumbly. Sprinkle over muffins before baking.



My Notes:

[illegible]

SALADS

THREE SISTERS SUCCOTASH

This is a contemporary twist on traditional succotash. It is a light dish that is served as a salad.

3 C corn kernels, cooked
3 C lima beans, cooked
1-2 C squash, zucchini or yellow summer, cut into match sticks
1 red pepper, chopped into small cubes
2 stalks of celery, chopped
1/2 C snowpeas

Lightly steam squash, peppers, snowpeas. Add to other vegetables, and toss with 1 cup of the following vinaigrette dressing*. Refrigerate at least one hour before serving.

Vinaigrette dressing:

Whisk together the following ingredients: 3/4 C olive oil, 1/4 C apple cider or red wine vinegar, juice from 1/2 lemon, 12 leaves of fresh basil, minced or 2 T dried basil, salt and pepper to taste, 2 T chopped fresh parsley.

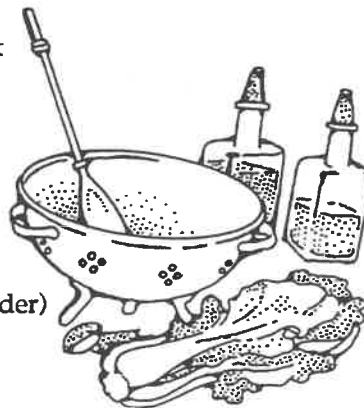
* You may substitute another vinaigrette or Italian-style dressing if you prefer.

MARINATED THREE SISTERS SALAD

This is a great salad for a "pot luck" or dish-to-pass supper, since it makes a large amount of salad. You can easily reduce the recipe by half if serving four people.



10-12 oz. black beans, soaked in water overnight
1 lb corn kernels
1 lb summer squash or zucchini, cubed
4 tomatoes, chopped
2 onions, minced
1 green pepper, chopped
1 red pepper, chopped
2 cloves garlic, minced
1/2 C fresh minced cilantro (or 2 T ground coriander)
1/2 C olive oil
1/4 C cider vinegar
salt to taste

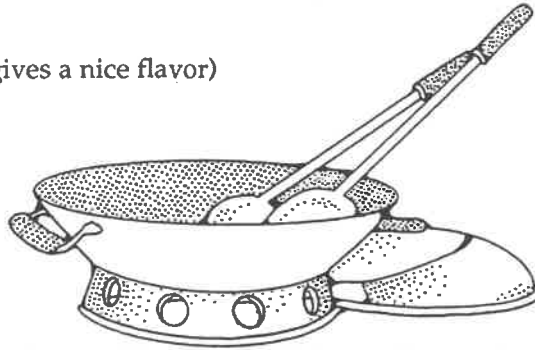


Cook the beans, corn and squash separately until tender but firm. (The beans will take the longest, since they need to be soaked overnight, and simmered for about 1 to 1 1/2 hours). Mix all the remaining vegetables together while the corn, beans and squash are still warm; place them in a big bowl, pour marinade sauce over them and gently toss. Let sit at least two hours before serving.

THREE SISTERS ORIENTAL

This is an Oriental "take" on the Three Sisters. The beans, in this case, are soybeans in the form of tofu, bean sprouts, soy sauce, and bean threads.

- 8 oz bean threads
oil to cover pan (sesame oil gives a nice flavor)
dash of soy sauce
4 cloves garlic
2 tsp. minced fresh ginger
4 T soy sauce
1 lb tofu, diced
2 cans baby corn
1 lb sprouts
6-8 squash blossoms
2 T rice wine vinegar



Soak the bean threads in water for ten minutes. Cut into smaller pieces with a knife. Stir fry lightly with the soy sauce, over medium-high heat in a pan coated with oil for 2 - 3 minutes. Set aside. Heat a little more oil and add garlic, ginger and remaining 4 T soy sauce. Add tofu, baby corn, sprouts, and squash blossoms. Stir fry gently and quickly until tofu begins to brown. Add vinegar just before turning heat off. In a bowl, place bean threads in the middle, and place the stir fry around them. Garnish with a large squash blossom. Serve cold or at room temperature.

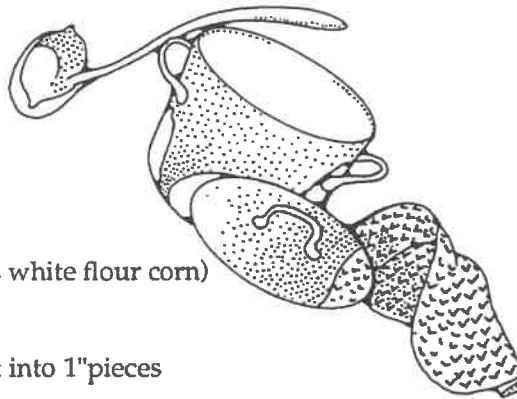
My Notes:

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SOUPS

SOUP A LA THREE SISTERS

olive oil to cover pan
2 onions, diced
2 leeks, chopped
3 cloves garlic, minced
1 quart tomatoes, chopped
2 green peppers, chopped
2 C pre-soaked corn kernels (Iroquois white flour corn)
4 carrots, sliced
4 potatoes, diced
2 C of green beans that have been cut into 1" pieces
2 summer squash, diced
3 T basil, minced
3 T parsley, minced
1 tsp. minced hot pepper* or 1/4 tsp dried cayenne pepper



In large sauce pan, sauté the onions, leeks, and garlic over medium heat in oil until they begin to brown. Add tomatoes and peppers, and cook for a minute over high heat. Reduce heat to a simmer, and add carrots, potatoes, and corn kernels; also add water to desired thickness. Bring to a full boil, cover, and turn heat down to medium-low. Simmer slowly for 2 hours. Add green beans, summer squash, and spices during the last 20 minutes. Serve with a crisp salad.

* Optional. Use rubber gloves while handling, and remember that hot pepper vary in strength!

MEXICAN VEGETABLE STEW

2 C onions, chopped (about 2 medium onions)
2 cloves garlic, crushed or chopped
2 C carrots, diced very fine
1 large red pepper, chopped
1 hot pepper, chopped fine*
4 C cubed zucchini squash
2 C tomatoes, chopped (canned or fresh)
1 T chili powder
1 T oregano
1/4 - 1/2 tsp cayenne pepper
2-4 C fresh or frozen kernels of corn
Grated monterey jack or extra sharp cheddar cheese

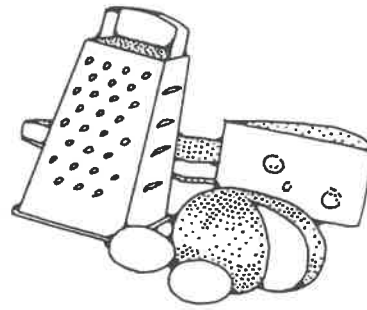


Sauté onions and garlic until translucent. Add carrots and pepper, and continue cooking until just tender. Add zucchini and tomatoes, and cook several minutes more. When tender, add spices and corn kernels, and cook for 15-20 minutes. Place in bowls and top with grated cheese. Serve with corn bread.

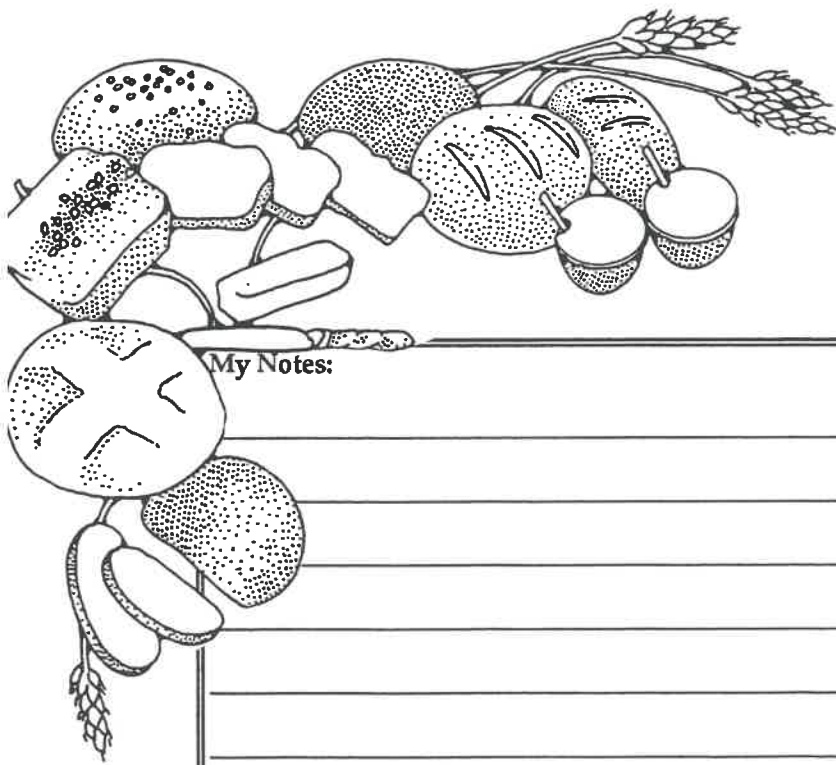
* Optional. Use rubber gloves while handling, and remember that hot pepper vary in strength! You may want to add a small amount of pepper and taste before using the entire pepper.

CORN AND CHEDDAR CHOWDER

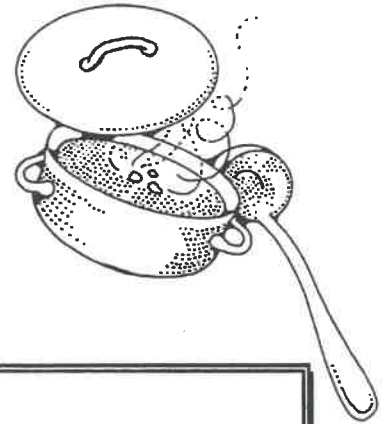
1 large potato
1/2 onion, minced
1/2 red pepper, minced
2 T butter
2 C fresh corn kernels
2 1/2 C milk
1/2 C grated cheddar cheese
dash of salt and pepper
dash of paprika
dash cumin



Peel the potato and dice into 1/2 inch cubes. Cook covered in a small amount of water until just tender - about 15 minutes. While the potato cubes are simmering, sauté the onion and pepper in butter in a saucepan over medium heat until the onions are transparent and lightly brown. Add potato cubes and remaining ingredients to onions and peppers, and heat gently, just till hot but not quite boiling. Allow to stand at this temperature for 10 minutes before eating. Enjoy with a crusty bread.



My Notes:



MAIN DISHES

POLENTA CUTLETS PARMESAN

This recipe has several steps, so read through the entire recipe before you're ready to cook! It involves making thin corn cutlets, dipping them in an egg mixture before breading them, and topping with sauce and cheese before baking. Since the cutlets need to "set" for 2-3 hours, plan on additional time; you may want to make the night before.

Polenta cutlets:

- 2 1/2 - 3 C of boiling water
- 1 1/2 C of cornmeal; store-bought, or your own ground
- 1/4 C finely ground roast corn
- 2 T Parmesan cheese

Mix cornmeal and ground roasted corn. Add boiling water slowly, stirring until thick. Pour this mixture into a pie dish or cooking sheet; it should be 1/2 inch thick. Set aside for at least 2-3 hours to cool. Cut into squares that are about 3 inches wide. You should have at least six of these cutlets.

Bread crumb mixture:

- 1 C seasoned bread crumbs
- 1/2 C grated pecorino or parmesan Cheese
- 2 T finely chopped parsley
- 2 tsp dried basil
- salt & pepper to taste

Toss all ingredients together.

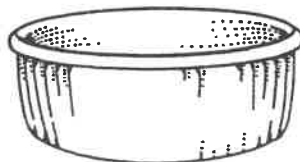
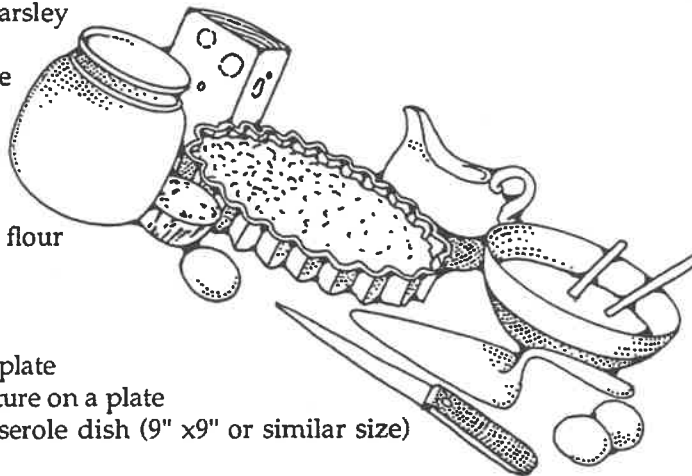
Egg mixture:

- 2 eggs, beaten
- 1T unbleached white flour

Set up an assembly line with:

- 1.) Cutlets
- 2.) Egg mixture on a plate
- 3.) Bread crumb mixture on a plate
- 5.) Lightly oiled casserole dish (9" x9" or similar size)

Preheat oven to 350° F. Dip each cutlet in egg wash till completely covered. (If they aren't quite firm enough and begin to fall apart, you can lay them in the casserole dish, and brush the egg over the top, flip them and repeat). Next, place each cutlet in the bread crumb mix, and then place on pan. Top with tomato sauce and grated mozzarella cheese. Bake for 1/2 hour, or until casserole is bubbly and cheese is golden.



STUFFED SWEET CORN CRÉPES

This dish is wonderful! It does, however, require a number of steps. If you want a quicker meal, you can simply make the crepes and enjoy them as they are. The stuffed crepes are nice for a more special meal.

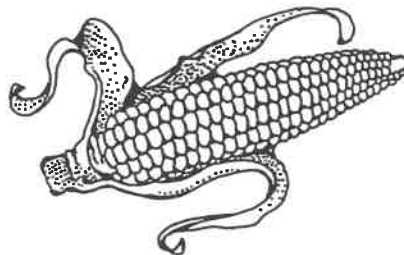
Crêpes:

3/4 C milk	1 tsp baking powder
3 eggs	1/4 tsp salt
2 T butter	1/2 C sweet corn niblets
1/2 C unbleached white flour	1/4 C scallions, minced very fine
1/2 C course corn meal	pinch of cayenne pepper or tabasco
1/2 C fresh or frozen corn kernels	3 T grated parmesan cheese
	pepper to taste

Put eggs, milk and butter in blender, and blend till thoroughly mixed. Add flour, cornmeal, baking powder, salt, and frozen corn to blender. Blend till smooth. Pour into bowl and stir in remaining ingredients. Let rest for one hour at room temperature, or for three hours in refrigerator.

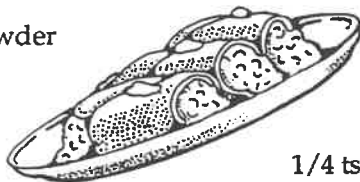
Filling:

1 T olive oil
1 1/2 C fresh or frozen corn kernels
3/4 C zucchini, diced
1 red pepper, diced
1/2 green pepper, diced



Heat oil in frying pan. Sauté vegetables in oil until tender and crisp. Add the following spices to vegetables, and set vegetables aside:

1/2 tsp cumin
1/2 tsp chili powder
1/2 tsp oregano



Sauce:

1 T oil	1/4 tsp pepper
1 clove garlic	2 T unbleached white flour
1 small onion, chopped fine	2 C milk
2 large tomatoes, chopped	1/2 C. cheddar or monterey jack cheese
1 red pepper, finely chopped	dash of nutmeg

Saute onion, garlic and vegetables in oil until onions are transparent. Add flour and quickly stir for another 2 minutes. Add milk and whisk until the sauce thickens. Add cheese and nutmeg, and simmer until cheese melts.

Preheat oven to 375° F. Now, prepare crêpes. *Very* lightly butter a griddle or frying pan. Heat to medium-high, and add 1/4 cup of batter. Cook both sides (as you would a pancake). Remove from heat and fill with 1/4 C vegetable filling. Roll into a tube and place in a baking dish. Repeat until all the crêpes are filled. Place cheese sauce over the filled crêpes, and bake till bubbly, about 15-20 minutes.

THREE SISTERS ENCHILADAS

olive oil to cover pan
2 onions, finely chopped
3 cloves garlic, minced
2 red and 2 green peppers, sliced into thin strips
2-3 small zucchini or summer squash, chopped
1 1/2 quarts tomato sauce
4 T fresh cilantro or 1 1/2 tsp dried coriander
24 corn tortillas (purchased, or see snack section to make your own)
3 C bean pureé (see bean dip recipe)
1 1/2 C sliced cheese

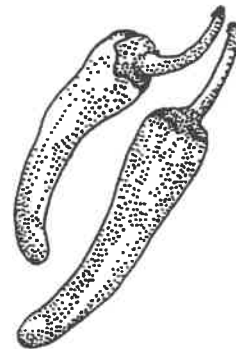


In a heavy-bottomed sauce pan, sauté onions, garlic, peppers, and squash in oil over medium heat. Add tomato sauce and cilantro; turn heat down to medium-low and simmer gently for 15 minutes.

Preheat oven to 350° F. To prepare enchiladas, lightly butter a large casserole dish. In casserole dish, place 1/2 of the tortillas. Spread bean dip over these, and top with 1 cup cheese. Place remaining tortillas over the top. Add tomato-squash sauce, and top with remaining 1/2 cup cheese. Bake covered for 30 minutes; remove lid and bake another 15 minutes or until golden and bubbly.

THREE SISTERS JALAPEÑO CORN CASSEROLE

1 pint sour cream or
1/2 pint sour cream and 1/2 pint plain yogurt
2 eggs, well beaten
1 lb fresh or frozen corn kernels
1 lb green beans, washed and cut in 1" pieces
1 lb summer squash, diced
1/2 stick melted butter
1 C cornmeal
1/2 C diced jalapeño peppers, fresh or canned*
1/2 C diced monterey jack cheese



Preheat oven to 350° F. Mix the sour cream and eggs together. Add remaining ingredients and mix well. Spread on an oiled pan and bake for about 45 minutes until golden.

* Optional. Use rubber gloves while handling fresh peppers; be aware that fresh peppers can vary in strength. If you prefer a milder dish, use canned peppers and reduce jalapeños by half.

My Notes:

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