

Chicken Enchilada Soup

from Leah Smith

2-3 T. vegetable oil
3 cups diced yellow onion
3 t. ground cumin
2 t. chili powder
½ t. cayenne pepper (omit if you don't want the heat)
3 cloves garlic, pressed
2 cups masa harina with lime, or instant masa* (NOT regular corn meal)
3 ½-4 quarts chicken broth, divided
1, 20 oz can diced tomatoes in juice, undrained
4 cups cooked, shredded chicken
1 can black beans, drained and rinsed
1 cup frozen or fresh white corn (canned doesn't hold up as well in soup, and white is heartier)
Juice of 3 limes (more if your limes are stingy)

Garnishes:

Shredded cheddar and Monterey jack cheese (or pepper jack if you want more kick)
Chopped avocado
Sour cream
Crumbled tortilla chips

Heat oil in a very large stockpot and sauté onions and spices for about 5 minutes, until onions are just soft. Add garlic and sauté for an additional minute.

In a separate bowl, whisk the masa harina into 1 quart of broth until smooth (this will be thick like cream of wheat). Add the masa mix to the onions and bring to a boil. Boil, stirring constantly, for 2-3 minutes (this cooks the bitter taste out of the masa). Add remaining 2 ½ quarts broth to the pot, reserving the last ½ quart in case you need it at the end. Stir in the chicken and the tomatoes with their juice. Simmer for about 5-10 minutes.

Add the beans and corn. Heat until corn is thawed. If soup is too thick, add the remaining broth. Stir in the lime juice.

To serve, sprinkle some cheese in the bottom of a bowl, add soup on top and stir to combine. Add avocado, sour cream, and tortilla bits as desired.

* I had to go to a Mexican tienda to find this. It is NOT regular corn meal. It is tortilla or tamale flour, which is corn flour mixed with lime (the chemical calcium hydroxide, *not* the citrus fruit). Stir it in an airtight container (or big Ziploc bag) in the freezer to maximize storage time.