



## COOKING CLASSES

AT SUR LA TABLE



# SOUTH AMERICAN KITCHEN: STEAK

WITH CHEF  
Davide G.

## CHEESE STUFFED MASA CAKES WITH SALSA ROJA

*Yield: 4 servings*

These masa cakes, called pupusas, are similar to corn tortillas, only thicker and often stuffed with cheese, beans, or meat. While pupusas originated in El Salvador, they are also popular in neighboring Honduras.

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*2 cups instant masa harina*  
*1 1/4 cups warm water*  
*1 teaspoon sea salt*  
*1 cup shredded Oaxaca or Queso Blanco cheese*  
*3 tablespoons vegetable oil*  
*Salsa Roja, for serving (Recipe follows)*

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1. To a large bowl, add masa harina, water, and salt; mix together and knead well until moist yet firm dough forms that does not crack at the edges when pressed. Knead in more water, 1 tablespoon at a time, if needed. Cover and set aside to rest for 10 minutes.

2. Roll dough into a log and cut into 4 equal portions. Roll each portion into a ball. Shape an indent in each ball with your thumb. Put about 2 tablespoons of shredded cheese into each indent and fold the dough over to completely enclose it. Carefully, with wet hands, pat pupusa into a flat disk about 6 inches wide and about 1/2 inch thick; if edges crack, run a wet finger around them to smooth. Place pupusas on a baking sheet and keep covered with a towel as you work. Repeat with remaining masa balls and filling.

3. *To cook pupusas:* To a large nonstick skillet set over medium-high heat, add oil. When oil is shimmering, carefully add the pupusas and cook, gently pressing to ensure even browning, 4 to 6 minutes per side or until golden brown and cooked through. Transfer to a platter and serve warm with salsa roja.

## SALSA ROJA

*Yield: 2 cups*

This is a traditional cooked salsa accompaniment for pupusas. Leave the seeds in jalapeno for an extra spicy salsa.

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*3 tablespoons vegetable oil*  
*1/2 cup chopped yellow onion*  
*2 garlic cloves, minced*  
*1 jalapeno, seeded and minced*  
*2 cups chopped Roma tomatoes*  
*1 teaspoon dried oregano*  
*1/4 cup chopped fresh cilantro*  
*Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper*  
*Fresh lime juice, to taste*

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1. To a medium saucepan set over medium heat, add oil. When oil is shimmering, add onion and sauté until translucent, 2 to 3 minutes. Add garlic and jalapeno and sauté until fragrant, about 1 minute more. Add the tomatoes and oregano and simmer for 10 minutes.

2. Using a hand blender, puree the mixture to desired consistency. Transfer salsa to a serving bowl and fold in cilantro; taste and adjust seasoning with salt, pepper, and lime juice.

## GRILLED FLANK STEAK WITH CHIMICHURRI SAUCE

*Yield: 4 servings*

Flank steak is a lean, flat cut of beef that's fairly tender and extremely flavorful. Properly marinated, it's a wonderful steak to grill or broil, but don't overcook it or it will become very tough. Skirt steak or tri-tip are other great options.

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### *Steak marinade:*

*1 teaspoon black peppercorns, toasted  
1 teaspoon cumin seeds, toasted  
1/4 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes  
2 bay leaves  
1/4 cup red wine  
2 teaspoons red wine vinegar  
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard  
2 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce  
4 garlic cloves, crushed  
4 fresh thyme sprigs  
1/2 cup fresh flat-leaf parsley, roughly chopped  
1 shallot, thinly sliced  
1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil*

### *Steak:*

*1 1/2 pounds beef flank steak  
Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper  
Vegetable oil, for brushing grill grates*

### *Chimichurri sauce:*

*1 cup packed fresh flat-leaf parsley leaves  
1/2 cup packed fresh cilantro leaves  
1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil  
2 garlic cloves, coarsely chopped  
1/2 teaspoon toasted and ground cumin seeds  
1 tablespoon fresh oregano leaves  
1/2 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes  
1/3 cup red wine vinegar  
Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper*

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- 1. To marinate the steak:* In a mortar and pestle or on hard surface with heavy skillet, crush peppercorns and cumin seeds; transfer to baking dish big enough to accommodate the whole flank steak. Add remaining marinade ingredients; stir to combine. Prick flank steak all over with a fork and place in marinade; spoon some marinade over the top. Cover and refrigerate, turning occasionally, for 6 to 12 hours. (Alternatively, use a vacuum sealer or instant marinator to reduce the marination time by half.)
  - 2. About 20 minutes before grilling, remove steak from marinade. Transfer steak to a plate or rimmed baking sheet and season generously with salt and pepper; set aside to come to room temperature.*
  - 3. To prepare chimichurri:* To a blender or food processor, add all chimichurri ingredients. Pulse until finely chopped, stopping to scrape down sides as needed. Transfer to a medium bowl. Taste and adjust seasoning with salt and pepper, set aside.
  - 4. To grill steak:* Preheat a grill or grill pan over medium-high heat. Using a silicone brush, coat the grates with oil. Transfer steak to the grill and cook until a digital thermometer inserted into the thickest part of the meat registers 135°F, 5 to 7 minutes per side for medium-rare.

5. *To serve:* Transfer steak to a cutting board, loosely tent with foil, and rest for 5 minutes. Slice crosswise into 1/2-inch slices and transfer to a serving platter along with any accumulated juices. Serve with chimichurri sauce spooned over the top.

## WARM CORN SALAD WITH CHILE, LIME, AND COTIJA CHEESE

*Yield: 4 servings*

When corn is in season, try adding it raw to the salad.

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*3 tablespoons vegetable oil, divided*

*4 ears of corn, husked and kernels removed, or 16 ounces frozen corn kernels, thawed*

*Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper*

*2 tablespoons fresh lime juice, plus more to taste*

*1 teaspoon chipotle chile powder*

*1 cup cherry tomatoes, halved*

*3 green onions, white and light green parts only, thinly sliced*

*1 jalapeno, seeded and minced*

*1/3 cup chopped fresh cilantro leaves*

*2 ounces Cotija cheese, crumbled*

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1. To a large cast iron skillet set over medium-high heat, add 1 tablespoon oil. When oil is shimmering, add the corn and season with salt and pepper. Cook, stirring, until corn is heated through and lightly charred, 3 to 5 minutes.

2. To a large bowl, add remaining 2 tablespoons oil, lime juice, and chile powder; whisk to combine and season with salt and pepper. Add in the corn, tomatoes, onions, jalapeno, and cilantro. Taste and adjust seasoning with salt, pepper, and lime juice.

3. *To serve:* Divide the salad among 4 plates, top with cheese, and serve.

## DULCE DE LECHE ICE CREAM

*Yield: 1 quart*

The dulce de leche thickens the ice cream base so there is no need to make a custard with eggs to achieve a velvety smooth consistency.

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*1 1/2 cups heavy whipping cream  
1 cup whole milk  
1 cup Dulce de Leche  
1/2 teaspoon vanilla bean paste or extract  
1/4 teaspoon fine sea salt*

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1. Place a 1-quart freezer-safe container with a tight fitting lid in the freezer to chill. Set up and pre-chill ice cream maker.
2. To a medium saucepan set over medium heat, add cream and milk and bring just to a simmer. Remove from heat and whisk in dulce de leche until dissolved. Whisk in vanilla and salt and transfer to a medium bowl; place bowl over an ice bath or refrigerate until cold.
3. Transfer custard to an ice cream maker and churn according to the manufacturer's instructions. Enjoy right away or transfer to a freezer-safe container to chill until firm.

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