HEALTHY COOK

BEST-MEX

BY KATE SHERWOOD

Here are three dishes that are inspired by the flavors of Mexico. Cilantro and lime make a mild fish sparkle, spicy chipotle mellowed by sweet orange juice makes chicken smoky and succulent, and fresh corn, crunchy tortilla chips, and crisp white onion make black beans irresistible..

Got a question or suggestion? Write to Kate at healthycook@cspinet.org.

Tilapia with Cilantro-Lime Sauce

Total Time: 30 minutes

1 large avocado
1 cup cilantro, chopped
3 Tbs. lime juice
¾ tsp. kosher salt, divided
4 tilapia fillets (about 1¼ lbs.)
Freshly ground black pepper
1 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil
4 cups finely shredded romaine
½ pint cherry tomatoes, sliced
2 scallions, sliced
4 oz. tortilla chips

Tilapia is a mild-flavored, white-fleshed, farmed fish. Domestic tilapia is the most environmentally friendly. A good alternative is tilapia from Latin America. Avoid tilapia from Asia.

Combine the avocado, cilantro, lime juice, and ½ tsp. of the salt in a small food processor. Blend until smooth.

• Season the tilapia well with pepper and the remaining ¼ tsp. of salt. Sauté in a non-stick pan in the oil until lightly golden on one side, about 3 minutes. Gently turn the fish over and sauté until just cooked, 2-3 minutes. • Divide the lettuce and fish among four plates. Top with the avocado mixture and garnish with the tomatoes, scallions, and chips. • Serves 4.

Per Serving: Calories 410; Total Fat 20 g; Sat Fat 2.5 g; Protein 31 g; Carbs 28 g; Fiber 8 g; Cholesterol 70 mg; Sodium 450 mg

Chipotle Chicken Lettuce Wraps

Total Time: 20 minutes

1¼ lbs. boneless, skinless chicken breast
1 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil
5 cloves garlic, minced
½ chipotle pepper in adobo sauce (more to taste), minced
1 cup orange juice
¾ tsp. kosher salt
16 Boston (or Bibb) lettuce leaves
4 oz. tortilla chips, broken up
3 scallions, sliced

Not a fan of finger food? Arrange the lettuce on four plates, top with the chicken, and garnish with the scallions and chips.

In a large non-stick pan, sauté the chicken in the oil until browned on both sides, about 3 minutes per side. The chicken will not be fully cooked, so remove it to a dedicated cutting board. • Add the garlic and chipotle to the pan and sauté for 30 seconds, then stir in the orange juice and salt. Simmer until slightly thickened, about 3 minutes. • Cut the chicken across the width into ½” slices and return them to the pan. Toss to coat with the sauce and cook through, 2-3 minutes.

• Cut the chicken across the width into ½” slices and return them to the pan. Toss to coat with the sauce and cook through, 2-3 minutes. • Stack the lettuce leaves on a plate. Serve the chicken, scallions, and chips in bowls. To assemble, spoon a small amount of the chicken, scallions, and chips into a leaf of lettuce and wrap. • Serves 4.

Per Serving: Calories 400; Total Fat 18 g; Sat Fat 2.5 g; Protein 32 g; Carbs 27 g; Fiber 3 g; Cholesterol 80 mg; Sodium 460 mg

Black Bean Fiesta

Total Time: 25 minutes

1 white onion, diced, divided
½ pint cherry tomatoes, chopped
¼ cup crumbled queso fresco
1 cup fresh corn kernels
3 Tbs. lime juice
1 red bell pepper, diced
1 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil
2 15 oz. cans no-salt-added black beans, drained and rinsed
¾ tsp. kosher salt
4 oz. tortilla chips
1 lime, cut into wedges

Queso fresco is a fresh white cheese that should be available in most supermarkets. If you can’t find it, you can use feta. For extra zing, add a few drops of hot sauce at the table.

In a large bowl, toss together half the onion with the tomato, cheese, corn, and lime juice. Set aside. • In a large skillet, sauté the remaining onion and the bell pepper in the oil until lightly browned, 2-3 minutes. Stir in the beans and sauté for another minute. • Add the contents of the skillet to the large bowl, mix all the ingredients together, and season with salt. Serve with chips and lime wedges. • Serves 4.

Per Serving: Calories 440; Total Fat 15 g; Sat Fat 3.5 g; Protein 20 g; Carbs 59 g; Fiber 14 g; Cholesterol 15 mg; Sodium 460 mg