

HOT 'N SUNNY



POBLANO SHRIMP CHOWDER



Sunny Conley and Marsha Swartz

By Sunny Conley Photography by Joseph Burgess

Bring time-honored dishes like corn or seafood chowder up-to-date with a whisper of chile. My pepper pick is poblano, a deep green chile that delivers more flavor than punch. I often substitute poblanos in recipes that call for bells. Bell peppers can be downright bitter if they're not well-seasoned.

Poblano Shrimp Chowder, made extra chunky with sweet corn kernels, is delightfully satisfying, especially on a chilly desert night. Snuggle up to a roaring fire with a mug of the stuff or share it with a friend as did I recently.

Armed with a crock full of chowder, I headed to Marsha Swartz' place. We sipped and savored the creamy concoction in her newly remodeled kitchen (of the granite and stainless steel rage). The chowder, and supreme surrounds, kicked up my dining experience at least a notch or two.

Poblano Shrimp Chowder

(Makes 8 generous servings)

- ½ cup peeled, chopped white onion
- 3 stalks celery, chopped (ends removed)
- 2 tbsp European style butter*
- 2 poblano chile peppers, stemmed, seeded and diced
- 1 quart heavy cream
- 1 quart half-and-half cream
- ⅓ cup white sugar
- 3 pinches ground dried chile de arbol or to taste
- 1 tsp ground black pepper
- ½ cup European style butter
- ½ cup flour
- 1 (15 oz) can cream-style corn
- 1 (15 oz) can whole kernel corn, drained
- ½ pound cooked and chopped small shrimp, tails removed
- Salt to taste
- White sugar to taste
- Optional garnishes: Shredded cheese and cilantro

In a blender, purée the onion and celery; drain. (Add a little water to the blender if blades aren't sharp enough to purée the onion and celery.)

Melt 2 tablespoons of butter in a Dutch oven over medium heat. Stir in the onion and celery purée and the poblano chile. Stirring constantly, cook about 5 minutes or until poblano is tender. Add both varieties of cream, the sugar, and the chile de arbol and black pepper to taste. Stirring constantly, bring ingredients to a gentle boil.

Melt ½ cup butter in a medium size saucepan over medium heat. Mix in flour**, and stir constantly until thickened. Remove from heat, and gradually mix into the Dutch oven. Cook and stir until mixture is well blended and thickened.

Add both canned corn varieties into the Dutch oven mixture. Stir in the shrimp and season with salt and sugar. Serve in soup mugs or bowls. Sprinkle with additional chile de arbol and cheese, if desired. Garnish with a sprig of cilantro.

*European style butter, available in most grocery stores, has a creamier taste and a silkier texture than regular butter.

**Make certain that the flour added is lump-free. This helps ensure a smoother blend.





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