

Coconut

WITH PINEAPPLE CHIPOTLE COULEE AND TAMARIND SAUCE

By Bob Skolnick Photography Marty Snortum Studio

This tasty and visually attractive shrimp, served atop cilantro rice with a zesty mango kiwi pico de gallo, was provided by the Executive Chef, Omar Carranza, of Yum Balam Restaurant located on Mesa Street in El Paso. Even though there are two sauces, a pico de gallo and a rice to prepare, all can be made in advance, leaving only the cooking of the shrimp right before serving.



Tamarind Sauce

Ingredients

- 1 can coconut milk
- 1 cup water
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 4 oz tamarind candy
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 small jalapeno, seeded and diced

Preparation

Combine water and white granulated sugar in a saucepan. Heat to make a simple syrup. Once the simple syrup is ready, add the tamarind candy and bring to a light boil until the candy is fully dissolved (several minutes) and blended into the simple syrup. Remove from the heat and strain. Return the strained sauce to a saucepan on medium heat and blend in the coconut milk, brown sugar, garlic and jalapeno (use as much jalapeno as you like for your personal desired spiciness). Rapidly simmer the sauce and ingredients, stirring regularly for 10 minutes. Remove the finished sauce from the heat & strain. Set aside and keep warm for plating later.



Shrimp

Coconut Shrimp

Serves 4

Ingredients

- 20 each jumbo tiger shrimp - raw, with the shell on
- 2 cups seasoned flour (preferably Panko)
- 8 oz coconut milk
- 8 oz pineapple juice
- 15 oz coconut - freshly shredded
- 1 1/2 quarts peanut oil (or vegetable oil)

Select 20 raw jumbo tiger shrimps with the shell on at your local fish counter. Rinse the shrimp and remove the shell all the way down to the tail, leaving the tail shell on. With a paring knife, make a quarter inch surface slit down the back of the shrimp and remove the vein. You may have to hold the shrimp under running cold water to get the vein out. After the shrimp are peeled, place them in a covered bowl and refrigerate. Combine the coconut milk and pineapple juice. (If you cannot find either in the grocery, a commercial pina colada mix will substitute). Next, take the shredded coconut and process it in a food processor with a few pulses to break the coconut strands down into shorter pieces. Place the shredded coconut on a flat plate or pan and set aside. Take the flour (preferably Panko) and season slightly with garlic salt and pepper. Set up a breading line with the seasoned flour, coconut- pineapple bath and shredded coconut breading. Remove the shrimp from the refrigerator and one by one, place in the seasoned flour coating them lightly with the flour. Transfer the flour-coated shrimp to the pineapple - coconut bath and cover the shrimp with the liquid. Remove the wet shrimp from the bath with a pair of tongs and transfer to the shredded coconut. Toss the shrimp gently in the shredded coconut until fully covered with coconut on all sides. You can pat the shrimp with your hands to make sure the coconut adheres. Place the breaded shrimp on a pan or plate covered with wax paper or clear wrap. Once all of the shrimp are breaded, set them aside back in the refrigerator. You can cook the shrimp just before you are ready to serve and plate.

To cook the Coconut Shrimp, heat peanut oil in a sauté pan with tall sides. The oil should be at least one and half inches deep in the pan. Bring the oil to temperature and test by placing a little strand of coconut in the hot oil to see how quickly it cooks. You have to be careful that the oil is hot enough to cook the shrimp, but not so hot that it burns the coconut. In this instance, less is better at first. You can always increase the heat. When the oil is ready, place the shrimp one by one into the cooking oil and cook turning them over gently with tongs so that they are brought to a golden brown on all sides. As the shrimp cook, remove them to a paper towel to absorb the surface oil. Transfer the cooked shrimp to a pan covered with aluminum foil and keep them warm in a 250-degree oven until ready to plate.

Cilantro Island Rice

Ingredients

- 10 oz long grain rice
- 20 oz mild chicken stock
- 1 oz garlic, minced
- 1/2 teaspoon saffron, chopped
- 1/2 cup cilantro, chopped
- 2 oz peanut or vegetable oil

Preparation

In a pan that can be placed in the oven, sauté the long grain rice in peanut or vegetable oil until coated and lightly toasted. Add the chopped saffron strands and stir and sauté for a minute more. Add the chicken stock and bring the rice mixture to a boil, stirring regularly. Add the finely chopped cilantro. Cover the pan tightly and place in a 350 degree oven and bake for 45 minutes. Remove the cooked rice from the oven and test for doneness. We have used a ration of 2 to 1 liquid to rice, which should produce a softer pilaf. Ideally we want to place the pilaf (when plated) in a dome or tower on the plate. The easy way to do this is to select 4 ramekins, molds or soup cups and heat them slightly. Lubricate their interiors with spray oil or wipe with peanut or vegetable oil. Pack the cups or ramekins tightly with the rice pilaf until full to the top and level. Cover tightly and set aside in a warming drawer or on the stovetop until you are ready to plate.

Mango - Kiwi Pico de Gallo

Ingredients

- 1 medium, ripe mango
- 2 kiwis, firm
- 1 jalapeno pepper
- 1 large tomato
- 1 bunch fresh cilantro
- 1 tablespoon lime juice
- salt & pepper to taste

Peel the mango and kiwi and dice into quarter inch cubes. Seed the tomato and dice into the same size. Using gloves, seed the jalapeno and remove stem and interior ribs. Dice the jalapeno a little finer than the fruit. Chop the cilantro medium. Combine all ingredients in a glass or stainless bowl, season to taste & cover. Place in the refrigerator.

Pineapple - Chipotle Coulee

Ingredients

- 1 each fresh pineapple, whole and ripe
- 1 can chipotle peppers in sauce
- 2 tablespoons sugar

Peel and core the fresh pineapple, making sure all of the eyes and center core are taken away. Cut the pineapple flesh into smaller-sized cubes and place in a food processor or blender. Process or blend until the pineapple meat is the consistency of applesauce. Taste the mixture for sweetness. If the mixture is tart, add the granulated sugar to taste. Open the can of chipotle peppers and remove 2 peppers from their sauce (you can use more or less chipotle, depending on your personal spice preference) and chop them fine on a cutting board. Add the chipotle to the processed pineapple meat and pulse a few more times until fully blended into the mixture. Keep at room temperature until plating.



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