

Blackened Chicken Empanadas with White Corn & Black Bean Mâque Choux

Every culture has its own version of a meat pie. Latin and South American countries have the empanada, a spiced meat mixture encased within a baked dough shell made from a fine corn flour called masa harina. The filling for this dish is made from heavily spiced white-meat chicken cooked in a rich tomato sauce. Adding to the dish is a fusion-style mâque choux, a Creole side dish, which has been adapted to include classic Latin ingredients.

YIELD – 4 servings

Pour the water into the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with a dough hook. Whisk in the yeast and sugar until they are completely dissolved. Let bloom for 10 minutes. Add 2 tablespoons of the oil, the flour, masa harina, chili powder, ½ a teaspoon of the salt and ¼ of a teaspoon of the pepper and mix on medium speed until the flour comes off the side of the bowl and forms a round ball of dough. Coat the dough on all sides with 1 tablespoon of the oil and place it in a large bowl. Cover the bowl and store in a cool, dry place. Let proof until the dough has doubled in size, about 1 hour.

Heat the remaining oil in a large skillet. Season the chicken with cumin, paprika and the remaining salt and pepper. Add the chicken to the skillet and cook until golden brown and cooked through, about 8 minutes. Add the onion, bell pepper and chili and cook until soft and tender, about 7 minutes. Add the garlic and cook, stirring, for 1 minute. Add the tomato sauce and cook until the mixture thickens slightly, 3 to 4 minutes. Add the cilantro, parsley and ¼ of a cup of the Jack cheese and cook, stirring, until all of the ingredients are fully incorporated. Remove the mixture from the heat and transfer to a bowl to cool.

Preheat oven to 450 degrees.

Turn the dough out onto a floured surface. Separate the ball into 4 equal parts and roll, 1 at a time, into ¼-inch thick rounds. Spoon a fourth of the chicken mixture into the center of each round. Fold the round in half and use the tines of a fork to crimp the edges closed. Arrange the empanadas on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper. Brush the tops of the empanadas with egg white and place in the oven. Bake until the dough is golden brown, 10 to 12 minutes. Remove from the oven and top each empanada with equal parts of the remaining cheeses.

To serve, spoon a fourth of the mâque choux in the center of a round appetizer plate. Center an empanada atop the mâque choux, top with a small mound of tomatoes and serve.

White Corn & Black Bean Mâque Choux

YIELD – 1½ cups

Melt the butter in a sauté pan over medium heat. Add the onion and chili, season with salt and pepper and sauté for 2 minutes. Add the corn and flour and sauté until the vegetables are soft and tender, about 7 minutes. Add the beans and milk and cook, stirring, until the mixture has thickened to a creamy consistency, 4 minutes. Remove from heat, fold in the cilantro and serve.

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¾ cup water, heated between
104 and 110 degrees
¼ ounce active dry yeast
1 Tbsp granulated sugar
5 Tbsp corn oil
1¼ cups bread flour
¾ cup masa harina
1½ tsp salt
½ tsp fresh ground pepper
½ pound boneless, skinless chicken
breast meat, diced
1½ tsp cumin
1 tsp paprika
½ cup white onion, diced
¼ cup red bell pepper, diced
2 Tbsp anaheim chili, seeded and
diced
1 Tbsp garlic, minced
½ cup tomato sauce
2 tsp cilantro, chopped
1 tsp parsley, finely chopped
½ cup Monterey Jack cheese,
shredded
1 egg white
1½ cups white corn and black bean
mâque choux (recipe follows)
¼ cup cheddar cheese, shredded
½ cup tomatoes, seeded and diced

2 Tbsp unsalted butter
¼ cup white onion, diced
2 Tbsp anaheim chili, seeded and
diced
salt and fresh ground pepper to taste
¾ cup white corn kernels
2 tsp all-purpose flour
¾ cup cooked black beans
⅓ cup whole milk
2 tsp cilantro, chopped