



September 23, 2015

Southwestern Themed Dinners

The traditional cuisine of the southwestern United States is heavily influenced by Mexican flavours, often making use of ingredients like tangy tomatoes, spicy chilies, and hearty beans. Think beyond tacos and burritos with these creative ways to bring southwestern flavours into your kitchen:

You won't miss the meat in our Southwestern Vegetarian Lasagna, which is loaded with black beans, corn and cheese. Salsa, cumin and oregano brings this dish from Italy to the US.

Our Southwestern Quesadillas make an easy weeknight meal or a quick snack. No ham on hand? The recipe is great with leftover chicken, or leave it out to make it vegetarian.

We added black beans in our Southwestern Perogies, upping the protein and fibre for a hearty meal.

SOUTHWESTERN VEGETARIAN LASAGNA

Ingredients:

3/4 cup (175 mL) medium salsa
1 can (14 oz/398 mL) diced tomatoes
1 can (7 1/2 oz/213 mL) tomato sauce
1 1/2 tsp (7 mL) cumin
1/2 tsp (2 mL) oregano, crumbled
7 - 8 oven-ready lasagna noodles, broken in half
1 can (19 oz/540 mL) black beans, rinsed and drained
1 cup (250 mL) frozen kernel corn, thawed
1/2 cup (125 mL) thinly sliced green onions
2 cups (500 mL) shredded marble cheddar cheese



Method:

Combine salsa, tomatoes, tomato sauce, cumin and oregano. Spread 3/4 cup (175 mL) of salsa mixture over bottom of a greased 8 inch (20 cm) square baking dish. Cover with a single layer of halved noodles, breaking to fit as necessary. Combine beans, corn and green onions. Spoon half of bean mixture over noodles. Sprinkle with 1/2 cup (125 mL) cheese. Repeat layering procedure with 3/4 cup (175 mL) salsa mixture, noodles, remaining bean mixture and 1/2 cup (125 mL) cheese. Top with 3/4 cup (175 mL) salsa mixture. Cover with a single layer of remaining noodles. Spoon remaining salsa mixture over top and sprinkle with remaining cheese. Press down lightly to pack lasagna slightly. Cover with foil and refrigerate for at least 8 hours or up to 24 hours. Remove from refrigerator and let stand for 20 - 30 minutes. Bake, covered, at 375°F (190°C) for 45 - 55 minutes or until noodles are tender and lasagna is heated through. Let stand for 5 minutes before serving. *Serves 4 - 6.*

Cook's Note: Oven-ready lasagna noodles are sometimes referred to as no-boil or instant lasagna noodles. They do not need to be cooked prior to assembling the lasagna

SOUTHWESTERN QUESADILLAS

Ingredients:

1/2 cup (125 mL) medium salsa
1 cup (250 mL) chopped ham
1/2 cup (125 mL) drained canned kernel corn
1/4 cup (50 mL) thinly sliced green onion
8 flour tortillas (8 inch/20 cm)
3/4 cup (175 mL) shredded Monterey Jack cheese with jalapeno

Method:

Combine salsa, ham, corn and onion. Spread mixture evenly over 4 tortillas. Sprinkle with cheese. Top with remaining tortillas. Grill over low heat on natural gas barbecue for 2 minutes per side or until golden brown and heated through. Cut into wedges. *Serves 2 - 3.*



SOUTHWESTERN PEROGIES

Ingredients:

1 tbsp (15 mL) oil
1/2 cup (125 mL) diced red onion
1 - 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
1 tbsp (15 mL) cumin
1/4 tsp (1 mL) freshly ground pepper
1 can (19 oz / 540 mL) black beans, rinsed and drained
1/4 cup (50 mL) chopped fresh cilantro
15 potato and cheddar cheese perogies, cooked and drained
1/2 cup (125 mL) medium salsa
1/2 cup (125 mL) shredded cheddar cheese

Method:

Heat oil in a large frypan over medium heat. Add onion and saute until tender, about 5 minutes. Stir in garlic, cumin and pepper; cook and stir for 1 minute. Add beans and cook until heated through. Stir in cilantro. Add hot cooked perogies to bean mixture and toss gently. Top with salsa and cheese. Cover frypan; remove from heat. Let stand until cheese is melted. *Serves 4.*