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We believe fresh, good food not only feeds the body, but the mind and spirit as well.”

Reynaldo Hernandez,
Co-Founder and VP,
Epicurean Group



Memories of a Texas Summer

Summertime takes me back to my childhood in Texas with memories of outdoor activities in the shimmering heat, road trips and ... barbecue. Dad loading all the kids up in the Volkswagen bus (sans air conditioning!) for a one-hour-plus drive to my Mom's birthplace, Lockhart, in the south-central part of the state. Our goal? Kreuz Market, a BBQ shack that Mom frequented when she was a child.

The smokers were huge and, as you walked in, you saw the fire pit, right on the floor next to the door. There's a counter that they maintained from the era when my Mom visited as a child. There you find communal steak knives chained to the wall to limit "long-term borrowing." There were no plates either, just the meats – brisket, chicken and links – served up on pieces of butcher paper.

The memory is invoked by the smell of the smoke and taste of the meat. At home, I have an old indirect smoker that I like to fire up on occasion. As soon as smoke wisps begin to emerge from the chimney, I am taken back to that long drive in the summer heat to one of the altars of Texas BBQ.

These recipes will take some patience, especially the brisket and pecan pie. It's summer, so relax, no need to rush. Fall will be here soon enough.

—Chef Rey Hernandez, Co-Founder and VP, Epicurean Group

SUMMER MENU

Serves 8

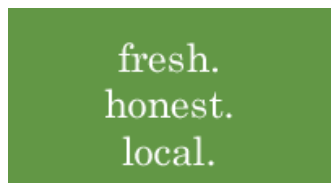
Texas-Style Old Creek Ranch Pork Chili

Babe Farms Rainbow Coleslaw with Chipotle Dressing

BBQ Grass-fed Beef Brisket with Sweet Red Onions and Homemade Dill Pickles, Baked Mayacoba Beans and Sautéed Boigiatto Ranch Chayote and Calabazita

Homemade Pecan Pie





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Texas-Style Pork Chili

4 lbs. pork butt, trimmed and cut into 1-inch cubes
Kosher salt
2 Guajillo dried chilies, stems and seeds removed
2 Ancho dried chilies, stems and seeds removed
4 cups beef stock
6 Japones chilies, stems and seeds removed
1 ounce Piloncillo or dark brown sugar
1/2 lb. bacon, diced
1 whole yellow onion, diced
3 whole garlic, peeled, crushed and chopped coarsely
1/2 cup Masa Harina*
2 large ripe tomatoes, diced
8 ounces tomato sauce
Kosher salt and fresh ground pepper
1 large red onion, diced finely

**Epicurean Tip: Unique Ingredients Up the Taste Ante*

Masa Harina is made from hominy and has a very distinct flavor. I prefer it for my chili, but any type of flour may be used as a replacement.

Directions:

Spread the diced pork on a non-reactive sheet pan and sprinkle with kosher salt. Cover with plastic and place in the refrigerator.

Hold the dried, cleaned Ancho and Guajillo chilies with a pair of tongs over an open flame until toasted. Place in a small saucepan and add 2 cups of the beef stock.

Heat a skillet over high heat and add the Japones chiles. Stir and toss over high heat until well toasted. Remove from skillet and add to saucepan. Bring the saucepan to a boil over high heat and then drop to a low simmer. Cook the chiles until very tender. Take off the heat and add the Piloncillo. Stir to dissolve. Pour all contents into a high-speed blender and purée until smooth. Set aside.

Place a large cast-iron Dutch oven on the stove over medium heat. Add the bacon and cook until the bacon is brown and the fat is rendered. Add the yellow onion and garlic and cook until tender.

Pour the Masa Harina over the diced pork and toss until well coated. Add the pork to the Dutch oven and brown, being careful to scrape the bottom of the pot each time you stir. Add the diced tomatoes and tomato sauce and stir until smooth. Add the remaining two cups of the beef stock and stir until smooth, continuing to scrape the bottom of the pot. Bring to a boil and simmer slowly until the pork is fork tender, about 1 to 1 1/2 hours. Add kosher salt and fresh ground pepper to taste.

To serve:

Ladle chili into 8 bowls. Serve immediately. Serve diced red onions on the side as an optional topping.

Rainbow Cole Slaw with Chipotle Dressing

1/2 head savoy cabbage, cut thin julienne
1/2 head red cabbage, cut thin julienne
2 carrots, peeled and shredded
2 red Kohlrabi, trimmed, washed and shredded
Kosher salt and fresh ground pepper
1 bunch green onions, sliced thinly on the bias

For the Dressing:

1/2 cup mayonnaise
1/2 cup sour cream
3 tablespoons rice wine vinegar
2 tablespoons organic evaporated cane juice
1 canned Chipotle Adobado chile, seeds removed
2 teaspoons Adobo sauce
Kosher salt



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Directions:

Place all dressing ingredients in a blender and puree until well blended. Add kosher salt as needed.

To serve:

Place cabbages, carrots and kohlrabi in a salad bowl. Season with salt and pepper, add the dressing* and toss until well coated.

Distribute onto 8 chilled salad plates, garnish with green onion and serve immediately.

**Epicurean Tip: Choose Your Crunch!*

The cabbage can be dressed sooner and set aside. You will lose the crunch of the vegetables, but it will become more infused with the dressing.

BBQ Brisket with Sweet Red Onions and Homemade Dill Pickle with Baked Mayacoba Beans and Sautéed Chayote and Calabizitas

For the Brisket:

10 to 12 lb. brisket, with fat cap left on
Kosher salt and fresh ground black pepper
2 red onions, peeled and sliced thinly

Directions:

Rinse the brisket under cold running water and pat dry. Sprinkle top and bottom of brisket liberally with salt and pepper, until well coated. Refrigerate, uncovered.

Soak 3 oak fire logs in a bucket of clean water.

Make a fire in an indirect smoker as you would for a fireplace, stacking dry tinder into a teepee shape and placing the oak logs* on top. When they are red-hot, place the brisket on the end of the smoker near the chimney and close the lid of the smoker. Place one of the water-soaked logs on the red-hot coals and close the air intake of the firebox. Watch the smoke coming out of the chimney. Initially, it will come out in a thick plume. As the fire cools, a result of the closed air intake and the wet log, the smoke will start to trickle out. You want to see wisps of smoke coming out of the chimney continuously. The thermometer on the smoke box needs to get between 185 and 200 degrees. You achieve this by adjusting the air intake and chimney opening. More air to the firebox makes a hotter fire, less and the opposite occurs. Once the smoke box is closed, it should remain closed, unless you need to add another water-soaked log. Smoke the brisket for 10-12 hours. Its doneness is not measured by internal temperature, but rather by touch. When you can press your finger into the hard fat on the thick end of the brisket and the fat is very tender, it is time to close the air intake and chimney. Let the brisket rest in the smoker for 1 hour.

**Epicurean Tip: Get Smoked!*

Hot Smoking (190 to 250 degrees F)

For hot smoking, I prefer to use hickory logs cut for the fireplace. This wood is not readily available in California, so my second and third choices would be oak or almond. Do not use green wood as this can impart a bitter aftertaste to smoked meats.

Cold Smoking (70 to 90 degrees F)

I like to use any and all fruitwood branches (peach, apricot, citrus.)

To serve:

Place the brisket on a cutting board. Separate the top piece from the bottom by cutting along the fat layer between them. Trim the larger bottom piece of all fat and slice thinly against the grain with your knife held at an angle facing away from you. Distribute among 8 plates and serve with thinly sliced red onions, homemade dill pickle slices and BBQ sauce on the side.



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For the Homemade Dill Pickles:

2 cups apple cider vinegar
1/4 cup evaporated cane juice
2 tablespoons kosher salt
1 teaspoon mustard seeds
1 teaspoon coriander seeds
1 teaspoon dill seeds
2 cups water
2 lbs. pickling cucumbers
2 shallots, julienned
4 whole garlic cloves, peeled and cut in 1/2
1 cup fresh dill, chopped coarsely

Directions:

Place vinegar, cane juice, salt, mustard, coriander and dill seeds and water in a non-reactive sauce pan and bring to a boil. Take off heat and stir until cooled to room temperature. Place cucumbers, shallots, garlic and dill in a non-reactive bowl and pour the brine over them. Place a plate on the cucumbers to keep them submerged in the brine. Wrap the bowl in plastic and refrigerate overnight. Serve chilled.

For the BBQ Sauce:

4 ounces butter
2 yellow onions, peeled and diced finely
4 cloves garlic, peeled, crushed and chopped finely
2 ounces Piloncillo or dark brown sugar
1 cup apple cider vinegar
32 ounces catsup
16 ounces tomato sauce
2 tablespoons Adobo sauce from canned Chipotle chilies
1 cup dark molasses
Kosher salt and fresh ground pepper

Melt butter in a large non-reactive saucepan over medium high heat. When it stops foaming, add the onions, garlic and Piloncillo. Cook, while stirring, until caramelized. Add vinegar and scrape the bottom of the saucepan. Add the catsup, tomato sauce, Adobo sauce and molasses, stir together and bring to a boil. Drop heat to a low simmer and cook for 45 minutes. Adjust seasoning with kosher salt and fresh ground pepper. Take off heat and set aside. Hold at room temperature until service.

To serve:

Place 3 cups BBQ sauce in a bowl for self-service.

For the Mayacoba Beans:

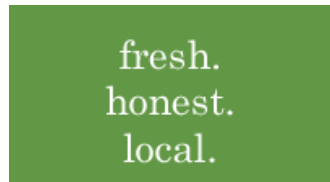
24 cups dried Mayacoba beans
8 cups cold water
1/2 lb. thick-sliced pork belly
1 large yellow onion, julienned
1 tablespoon fresh garlic, crushed and chopped fine
1 teaspoon dried thyme
1 teaspoon dried oregano
6 cups vegetable stock
Kosher salt and fresh ground black pepper
BBQ sauce to cover the beans, about a cup
6 strips bacon

Directions:

Rinse the beans with fresh running water and drain. Place in a non-reactive container and cover with 8 cups water. Place in the refrigerator to soak overnight.* Before cooking, drain the beans and discard the water. Set aside.

**Epicurean Tip: Go Soak Your...Beans!*

I pre-soak my beans not so much to remove the 'air' out of them but more to slightly reduce my total cooking time. If you forget to pre-soak, you can place



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them in the pot with enough cold water to cover 2 inches from the surface of the beans. Turn the heat to high and bring to a boil. Turn off heat, cover the pot and let sit for 1 hour. Drain the beans, discard the water and proceed with the recipe.

Place a large non-reactive soup pot over medium heat. Add the pork belly and cook until slightly browned and fat is rendered. Add the onion, garlic, thyme and oregano. Cook until tender and fragrant. Add the pre-soaked beans, add the stock and turn the heat up to high. Do not stir the beans. Cook until tender. Keep beans covered with stock, so the beans are always agitated and in motion. Once they are tender, drain the beans and reserve the liquid. Place the beans in a large casserole, season to taste with kosher salt and black pepper and set aside.

Place reserved liquid in a saucepan and bring to a boil. Reduce to 1 cup and add to the casserole. Use enough BBQ sauce from the previous recipe to cover the beans, then gently stir together. Place strips of bacon on top of the beans and bake at 350 degrees for 1 hour.

To serve:

Remove bacon and chop coarsely. Place back on top of beans and serve immediately.

For the Sautéed Chayote and Calabazas:

3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
2 medium red bell pepper, seeds and veins removed and cut into 1 inch cubes
4 Chayote squash, tough core removed and cut into 1 inch cubes
4 Tatume squash (Calabizitas), split, seeded and cut into 1 inch cubes
2 yellow tomatoes, cut into 1 inch cubes
Kosher salt and fresh ground black pepper

In a large non-reactive sauté pan, add the olive oil and heat over medium-high heat until it shimmers. Add the bell pepper and cook for 2 minutes, while stirring. Add the squashes and cook, while stirring, until heated through, about 2 minutes. Add tomatoes and cook for 1 minute. Lower heat to simmer and adjust seasoning with kosher salt and pepper.

Serve immediately.

Homemade Pecan Pie

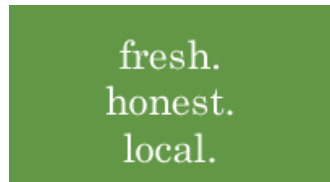
For the Crust:

1 1/4 cups all-purpose flour, plus more for dusting
2 tablespoons confectioner's sugar
1/2 teaspoon Kosher salt
10 tablespoons chilled sweet butter
1 large chilled egg white, mixed with ice water to yield 1/4 cup
1 large egg yolk, beaten with 1/8 teaspoon water

Preheat oven to 400 degrees.

Mix flour, sugar and salt in a mixer with the paddle on slow speed. Scatter the butter over the mixture and mix until it resembles coarse cornmeal. Add egg white mixture and mix on low speed until dough sticks together. Remove from bowl and shape into a 4-inch diameter disc. Dust lightly with flour and wrap with plastic. Refrigerate for 1 hour.

Dust counter with flour and place dough disc on top, flip over and dust with more flour. Roll to a 13-inch circle and transfer to a 9-inch pie pan. Press the dough snugly into the corners of the pan and flute the edge. Place shell in refrigerator again for 1 hour. Remove and use fork to poke holes in the surface. Place pie weights or uncooked beans inside shell all the way to the top. Return to the refrigerator for 1/2 hour, then move to the preheated oven and bake for 15 minutes. Remove pie weights and bake for an additional 5 minutes. Remove from oven, brush with egg yolk mixture and bake for 1 more minute.



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For the Filling:

6 tablespoons sweet butter cut into 1-inch cubes
1 cup packed dark brown sugar
1/2 teaspoon salt
3 large eggs
3/4 cup light corn syrup
1 tablespoons vanilla extract
2 cups pecans, toasted and coarsely chopped

Directions:

Preheat oven to 275 degrees. When heated, place the chilled pie shell in the oven while you prepare the filling.

Melt butter in a heatproof, non-reactive bowl set inside a bain-marie or double boiler with water heated to simmer. Remove bowl from bain-marie and mix in sugar and salt until well incorporated. Beat in the eggs, corn syrup and vanilla. Place bowl back in bain-marie and stir until it reaches a temperature of 130 degrees. Stir in pecans. Pour mixture into warm pie shell and place in oven. Bake for 50 to 60 minutes. The center of the pie will set and have a gelatin-like feel. Transfer to a pie rack and let cool for 2 hours.

To serve:

Slice pie into 8 slices and serve immediately.