05/11/10 - El Salvadorian Pupusas

My oldest son is a surfing maniac. On his breaks from school and research, he likes to travel to exotic locals to surf. One of his favorites is El Salvador, that tiny country in Central America with magnificent stretches of beach, great surf, and its own unique and quite tasty c

Since the Jewish holiday of Shavuot starts next Tuesday evening at Sundown and it is traditional to eat only dairy or non meat foods for the week of the holiday, I thought I would share this with you. My son raves about Pupusas every time he returns from El Salvador. Pupusas are little hand made thick tortillas stuffed with refried beans and cheese or grated zucchini and cheese. After I form them, I cook them on a heated double burner non stick pancake grill. The cheese melts and the beans or zucchini gets hot while the tortilla masa cooks over the flat surface of the grill. Serve hot Pupusas with a little salcita de tomate and some Salvadorian Curtido or pickled cabbage slaw. As you bite into the pupusa, with cheese oozing out, the contrast between the calm bean paste and the snappy bite and crisp texture of curtido w

Curtido

1 whole green cabbage, find a dense heavy one

2 large carrots

25 haricot vert

1-2 jalapeño peppers sliced in thin rings

1 large stock pot of water

1 cup apple cider vinegar

1 cup cold water

2 teaspoons to 1 tablespoon sea salt

2 teaspoons of dried oregano

Shred the cabbage as for cole slaw with a sharp knife. Peel the carrots and shred them on the medium or large holes of a box grater. Cut the cleaned haricot verte into 1 and ½ inch long pieces. Break the cauliflower into medium small florets.

Bring the stock pot full of water to a boil, then, salt the water, toss in the haricot verte and cauliflower florets and let them boil for 2 minutes. Add the cabbage and turn off the heat. Let the cabbage steep for five

minutes. Drain the whole thing in a colander.

Place the drained cabbage, haricot verte, and cauliflower in a large salad bowl. Add the carrots and sliced jalapeño rings. Next, add all of the dressing ingredients, vinegar, water, salt, and oregano. Toss the curtido together, cover, and refrigerate. This keeps for about a week refrigerated. It's like a cross between cole slaw and sauerkraut. Serve hot pupusa with this and a tomato salsa as sides.

1 16 ounce package of dry red kidney beans

10 cups of cold water

2 garlic cloves

1 teaspoon salt or to taste

¼ of a brown skinned onion

6 tablespoon of safflower

Place cold water in a medium sauce pan then add in the dried beans after you have rinsed and checked them for stone or other bits of debris. Bring the beans to a boil, turn down the heat a bit, and let them simmer for 1 and ½ to 2 hours until soft. Season with sea salt. The beans should boil down to about 7 cups of liquid. Puree the beans in their cooking liquid in a blender in batches taking care not to burn yourself. You should end up with about 6 cups of thick bean puree.

Preheat a 12 inch non-stick frying pan then add the 6 tablespoons of safflower oil. Place the ¼ of onion to brown in this oil. When the onion is very brown on all sides, remove it from the oil and add the beans. The onion is for flavoring the oil. Turn the heat down and cook the bean puree for about 45 minutes stirring occasionally until the beans have dried out from a puree to a paste. The bean puree will reduce in volume from 6 cups to 4 cups. Set the bean paste aside.

Cheese

14-20 ounces of Jack cheese grated on a box grater.

Place the cheese in a glass bowl and heat in the microwave for about 35 seconds. The cheese will not be melted but soft enough to mash into a paste.

Pupusa Dough

3 cups of Maseca flour (corn flour for tortillas)

2 teaspoons salt

3 cups cold water

Combine the Maseca with the salt, then add the water and knead the mix into a smooth dough with your hands. Prepare a little bowl of water for moistening your hands while forming the pupusas. Form a

Next, wet your hands, take one disc in your left hand, and rotating the disc with your right hand, use your index finger to create a flat edge as you from the

dough into a 4 inch disc. Now using your knuckles on your right hand, Press into the disc to form an indentation. Place two tablespoons of bean paste on one side of the indentation and two tablespoons of cheese on the other side. Fold the filled disc in half and seal the edge. Last step repeat the rotating motion with your pupusa in the left palm and using your right hand to rotate to create a circle once again. At this point, you can flatten the pupusa into a 4-5 inch round by hand or place the filled circle between two sheets of plastic wrap on the d esired size.

Cook the pupusas on a preheated flat surfaced pancake griddle or pan. I prefer non stick. Remove from the griddle when they are light golden on both sides, slightly puffed, with maybe a bit of cheese oozing out.

For an alternative stuffing you can grate 2 zucchini, ring them out until very dry, and use that in place of the beans.

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