

Recipes from *Nightshade*

China Bayles #16

By Susan Wittig Albert

China's Creole Aubergine

1 eggplant, sliced or cubed
2 tablespoons vegetable oil
2 tablespoons chopped onions
3 tablespoons chopped green bell peppers
3 cloves garlic, minced
1/4 cup sliced mushrooms
2 cups canned diced tomatoes
4 ounce can tomato paste
1/4 cup fresh basil, shredded
1 1/2 teaspoon ground bay leaves
1 teaspoon dried oregano
1/2 teaspoon thyme
1/4 teaspoon ground cayenne pepper
freshly ground black pepper
1/2 cup seasoned bread crumbs
1/2 cup grated yellow cheese
1 tablespoon margarine

Slice or cube the eggplant, sprinkle with salt and set it aside while you make the sauce. (This "sweating" will remove some of the natural bitterness.) Heat the oil in a skillet and sauté onions and bell peppers for 2-3 minutes, stirring. Add garlic and sauté for another 2-3 minutes, then mushrooms. Cook for another minute or two, then add tomatoes and tomato paste. Simmer for about 15 minutes, then add herbs and seasonings and simmer until thick, about another 15 minutes.

Rinse eggplant well and drop into boiling water; parboil 7-8 minutes, or until tender. Arrange a layer of eggplant in the bottom of a casserole dish. Cover with sauce. Continue layering, finishing with the sauce. Sprinkle on the cheese, top with seasoned bread crumbs, dot with margarine and bake at 350°F. for 30 minutes, or until bubbling. Serves 4-6.

Cass's Tomato-Basil Soup

4 cups canned crushed tomatoes
2 cups tomato juice
2 cups chicken or vegetable stock
1 tsp. dried thyme
2 bay leaves
2 cloves garlic, minced fine
1/3 cup fresh chopped basil leaves
1 cup half-and-half
1/4 c unsalted butter, softened
Salt and pepper to taste
Sour cream
4 tablespoons chopped fresh basil
4 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley

Over medium heat, combine tomatoes, juice, stock, bay leaves, thyme, and garlic in a large saucepan and simmer for 15 minutes. Remove bay leaves. In a food processor, combine tomato mixture and chopped basil in several small batches and process until smooth. Return blended mixture to saucepan over low heat. Stir in half-and-half and butter, season with salt and pepper. Continue stirring over low heat until soup is heated through. Ladle into 8 bowls. Add a dollop of sour cream and 1 tablespoon basil-parsley garnish to each bowl and serve.

Ellie Hanson's Tomatillo Salsa Verde

1 pound tomatillos
2 small serrano chile peppers
2 cloves garlic, minced
1/4 cup green onions, chopped
1 cup fresh cilantro leaves, chopped
2 tablespoons. lime juice
1 teaspoon sugar
Salt
Hot sauce to taste

Remove the husks from the tomatillos and cut each one into quarters. Coarsely puree uncooked tomatillos, chiles, garlic, green onions, cilantro, lime juice, and sugar in blender. Add salt and hot sauce to taste. Serve with soft tacos or burritos and as a dip for corn chips. Makes about two cups.

Slow-Cooked Beef and Chipotle Burritos

These delicious burritos are made with four members of the nightshade family: tomatoes, chile peppers, potatoes, and tomatillos.

1 1/2 pounds boneless beef round steak, 3/4 inches thick
1 14 1/2 ounce can diced tomatoes
1 medium onion chopped
1-2 canned chipotle peppers in adobo sauce, chopped
1 teaspoon dried oregano crushed
1 teaspoon ground cumin
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 cup cooked diced potatoes
6 large flour tortillas, warmed
1 cup shredded sharp cheddar cheese
2 cups of Ellie Hanson's Salsa Verde

Trim fat from meat and cut meat into quarters. Place meat, undrained tomatoes, onion, peppers, oregano, cumin, and garlic into a slow cooker. Cover; cook for 8-10 hours on low setting or 4-5 hours on high. Remove meat from cooker and shred, using 2 forks. Return to cooker, add diced potatoes, and stir to mix. Spoon one-sixth of this mixture onto each warm tortilla just below the center. Top with cheese and roll. Serve hot with tomatillo salsa verde. May be chilled or frozen for later serving.

Ellie's Chicken-Tomatillo Soup

1 boned chicken breast, pounded about 1/2" thick
3 tablespoons olive oil
1 onion, chopped
3 garlic cloves, minced
1 pound fresh tomatillos, husks removed, chopped (or 2 cups canned tomatillos, drained and chopped)
2 stalks celery, chopped
1/2 cup yellow bell pepper, chopped
1/2 cup red bell pepper, chopped
2 jalapeno peppers, seeded and chopped
1 teaspoon dried oregano
1 teaspoon dried thyme
1 teaspoon dried sage
1 tablespoon ground cumin
5 cups chicken stock
1/4 cups fresh lime juice
2 tablespoons cilantro, minced (or parsley, if you don't like cilantro)
Garnish: sour cream and cilantro or parsley leaves

Pound the chicken breasts lightly then sauté over high heat in a large saucepan or Dutch oven in the oil until both sides are browned, about 2 minutes a side. Remove the chicken, shred to bite size, and reserve.

Add the onions and garlic to the pan and sauté until golden. Add the tomatillos, celery, bell peppers, jalapenos, herbs, and stock. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat, cover, and simmer for about 15 minutes. Puree the solids in the blender and taste for seasoning.

Return to pot, add lime juice, and reheat. Shred the chicken to bite size and add to the soup. When ready to serve, stir in the minced cilantro and ladle into bowls. Drop a spoonful of sour cream on top and garnish with cilantro or parsley.