

FOOD AND CULTURE

Cooking With Children This Summer

During the summer, families go through a very big change of routine. Children have between 10 to 12 weeks of school vacation, and some parents continue their work obligations while trying to entertain their children as much as possible.

When I was young, my parents never had to put me in a summer camp because my mother, who was a school teacher, was with me during vacation. She took us to do sports, and we played with our friends in the street and in each others' houses all day long. My mother was my "summer camp" and did not need to spend tons of money to put me in expensive camps as today's parents do.

One of my favorite activities was to be in the kitchen with my mother to create different things.

Children find it stimulating and creative to be able to be in the kitchen with their parents. My suggestion for this summer is to pick out some recipes from adult or children cookbooks, do the shopping with them and let them pick out the ingredients at the supermarket. Let them have the responsibility of paying and counting the money at the checkout counter. Let them carry the food in the bags and prepare the food with you. In addition to giving them the opportunity of creating and feeling responsible, it gives them the empathy of seeing how much work parents go through to be able to give food to the family.

Cooking with children generates lovely memories. My children love to make bread and cakes with me, and of course, the best part is breaking the eggs. The first time my son broke an egg shell, he left the inside of the egg on the table and threw the egg shell into the cake dough in the mixer.

What is known to be true is that children will eat better the food that they have prepared, touching and feeling it as compared to food that they had nothing to do with.

Once we made blue tortillas, and being that I did not have the blue corn tortilla flour, we put food coloring in and made tortillas of different colors, with the same metal tortilla press of pre-Colombian origin, which is still used in Mexico.

There is a dish that is typically eaten at breakfast that is called chilaquiles. It comes from the nahuatl Chilaquilli, which is a word made up of chil (chile), the main ingredient, and aquilli that means to be put in

something. Therefore, the word chilaquiles means to be put in something. The dish consists of basically fried totopos (triangular pieces of tortillas) with a green sauce, which is used more often, a red sauce or a mole of some other variety. Grated cheese, cream, thinly sliced onion and, in some cases, fried egg go on top of the chilaquiles.

Children can easily help make this dish, and it can be a great culinary surprise for the rest of the family.

Begin by having your totopos ready, whether having the bought ones or having prepared them yourself.

Remove the papery leaves covering the green tomatoes, and boil the tomatoes in water. Once boiled, let them cool, and then put in the blender with raw onion, garlic, chili and cilantro. Blend until smooth.

Put a small amount of oil in a medium frying pan, heat, add in the green sauce and cook for 30 minutes or until it changes color to a darker green. Season with salt.

Once the sauce is cooked, add the totopos and serve immediately so they do not get too soft. Decorate with grated fresh cheese and cream, then serve. ♦

Ingredients

1 bag of totopos (corn tortilla that has been fried, they can be bought at the supermarket) or you can make them yourself. To make them, you need to buy corn tortillas and cut them into triangles. Let them dry, and fry them in oil the next day.

2 lbs. of green tomatoes (tomatillos)

½ onion

2 pieces of garlic

½ bunch of cilantro

½ of a jalapeño pepper

Fresh cheese

Cream

