

The Baja Kitchen -

Baja Recipes from Author Ann Hazard

Cooking with Baja Magic Dos - Mexican Recipes by Author Ann Hazard

These recipe will be featured in Ann Hazard's newest book, *Cooking With Baja Magic Dos*. It will be available in Fall 2005 throughout Baja and California. The new cookbook will have over 60 new recipes with corresponding stories and all new art. Whether or not you have Ann's original cookbook, you will want a copy of *Baja Magic Dos*! For more information on Ann and her Baja books, visit www.bajamagic.com.

Thank you to Author Ann Hazard from BajaMagic.com for this contribution.



LOBSTER PUERTO NUEVO

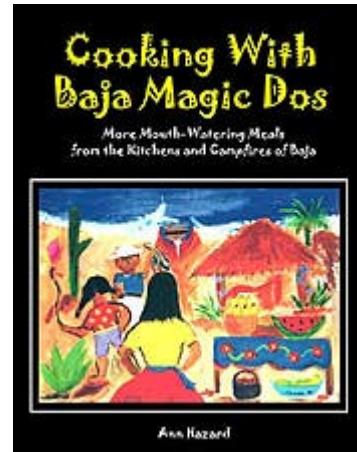
Thirty miles south of the Tijuana border is (what used to be a fishing village) Puerto Nuevo. In recent years its size has multiplied many times over until it has reached resort proportions. Puerto Nuevo is renowned throughout Southern California for its succulent lobster. It all started back in 1954, when Rosa María Plasencia's father came because he'd heard there were lobsters there — lots of them. There were. A year later Rosa María's mother's family came. The two young people met, fell in love, married and built a tiny house across the street from what is now the family restaurant, Puerto Nuevo II.

At that time there were only two or three families living on the cliffs overlooking the Pacific. Every day the men went out to sea in their pangas, free diving for lobsters. Every afternoon their wives would scan the waters until they saw their husbands' boats materialize on the horizon. Once a positive sighting was made, they'd rush to heat up beans and rice, pat out some fresh tortillas and put a kettle of lard on the fire. The men always came back ravenous, and when they unloaded their catch of lobsters, they'd slice a few in half, drop them into the bubbling lard and fry them up. There was no refrigeration back then, so the now-famous meal of fresh fried lobster, beans, rice and tortillas came into being purely out of necessity. The sea provided the lobsters. Beans and rice didn't need to be refrigerated, and the tortillas could be made on the spot.

Occasionally some Americans would show up and ask the men to take them out in their pangas. When they came back in, they'd join the Mexicans in a big meal. As is typical still today at fish camps up and down Baja, no money changed hands. The principle down here has always been, "barter is better," because everyone makes out. The Americans shared soda, ham sandwiches, cookies, candy and whatever else they had to spare in return for the fine food.

In the '50s, more families migrated to the area. One built a little stand next to the bus stop, where the welcoming arches are now. They sold sodas, snacks and burritos. Next to their stand was a billboard advertising Newport cigarettes. The Americans named the village after that sign, which, translated into Spanish, is Puerto Nuevo.

A major growth spurt occurred in Puerto Nuevo in the '70s when the Ortega family came to town and built four restaurants, which they publicized widely. The signs for all the Ortega's are



easily visible from the toll road and these days, about four thousand people make the trip to Puerto Nuevo to enjoy lobster dinners each week.

Puerto Nuevo lobster is deep fried in lard, the Mexican way. If you don't want to fry your lobster, try grilling it on the barbecue or boiling it in water plus a half cup of beer for five minutes. When served with beans, rice, tortillas and an array of different salsas, the meal takes on a festive atmosphere all its own. Frosty beers or Cokes are a must with this one. Serves six.

6 large Mexican lobsters, cut in half lengthwise
2 cups lard or solid vegetable shortening (optional: see above)
1 tbsp seasoned salt
1 tsp pepper
2 cups frijoles
2 cups Spanish rice
18 corn and/or flour tortillas
Salsa medley (Salsa section)

In heavy, deep skillet heat lard over medium high heat. Fry each half lobster for five minutes on each side, until meat is crisp, tender and will pop out of the shell on your fork. Continue for all lobsters. Drain on paper towels and place on serving dish in the oven on warm until ready to serve.

Heat frijoles and rice. Place in serving dishes. Heat tortillas in microwave one to two minutes until warm. Place in covered basket. Serve lobster with frijoles, rice, tortillas, salsas. People can eat the lobster either in a burrito with beans and salsa, or solo.

The Mexicans use tortillas the way our ancestors used bread, to scoop up and mop up their beans, rice, excess pan juices and salsa. Try it out yourself.

RAY'S SHRIMP PAPAGAYOS

Thirteen miles south of Mulege, on scenic Santispac beach is Ray's Place. We first visited in 1998, and Terry and Nina both fell in love with the house specialty, Camarones Papagayos (Parrot Shrimp). They're stuffed with fresh seafood (usually crab, but it varies, depending on what's fresh) and queso Chihuahua. Then they're wrapped in bacon and grilled to a crispy perfection. If you've been to Bahía Concepción, then you know Santispac, and you've probably been to Ray's and hung

out with the locals there. You also know what a treat it is to find a gourmet restaurant under a giant palapa with a sand floor in a fairly remote but spectacularly beautiful place. This recipe isn't quite Ray's. It's one of our friend Carol's works of culinary plagiarism as she helped me recreate this masterpiece. She should be an expert; she and her husband Mike lived in Mulege for a few years and this was their favorite meal. Next time you're in Santispac, don't forget to stop at Ray's. Serves four.

1 tbsp green onion
1 tbsp green bell pepper
1 tbsp celery salt
4 tbsp butter
¼ cup chicken broth
1 tsp cornstarch
1 tbsp Dijon mustard
1 tbsp red wine vinegar

1 tsp Tabasco or other hot pepper sauce
1 tsp Worcestershire sauce
2 cups cooked, flaked crab 24 jumbo shrimp,
peeled and deveined
24 - ½ x 1 inch chunks of queso Chihuahua or jack Cheese
24 pieces bacon and toothpicks

Place the green onion, bell pepper and celery salt in food processor and process until well minced. In a small saucepan over medium heat, melt the butter and sauté minced vegetables for two minutes. Whisk the chicken broth and cornstarch together in a small bowl and then whisk into the vegetables. Add the mustard, vinegar, hot pepper sauce and Worcestershire sauce and whisk to combine the ingredients. Bring the sauce to a boil and cook for one minute while whisking. Remove from the fire and cool. Stir in the crabmeat and refrigerate.

Fire up the barbecue. In skillet, cook bacon until about half done, but still limp. Butterfly the shrimp and put one tsp of stuffing and a piece of cheese inside each shrimp. Close and wrap securely with bacon and secure with a toothpick. Lay the shrimp on a buttered pan and cook over very hot fire, turning occasionally, for about 10 minutes until shrimp is cooked and bacon is crispy.

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