

TOMATOES

So many of the foods that I enjoy most now, I would not touch in my distant youth. Tomatoes may have topped the list of that which I shunned. What a dope. Now that we grow our own, I have come to have the greatest appreciation for the homegrown, heirloom tomato, which is at its best, at its simplest: naked, save for a pinch of salt. The recipes we prepare in this episode let the main ingredient shine; there's no need to overwhelm your Cherokee Purple or any garden tomato with too much of another good thing. And don't forget the recipes from previous episodes that let the tomatoes sing loud and proud!

COOKING
À LA *Lala*



SALSA VERDE À LA LALA

8-10 tomatillos, husked, washed and quartered

2-3 serrano peppers, stemmed and chopped (seeded if you want a milder salsa)

1 clove garlic, peeled and chopped

1/4 small white onion, peeled and chopped

1-2 avocados peeled, seeded and chopped

1/3 C. lime juice

Salt

Combine all ingredients except salt in a blender and pulse until well blended but not entirely smooth. Season with salt and devour.

SALSA ROJA À LA LALA

2 cloves garlic, *peeled*

2 ripe tomatoes, *whole*

1 serrano or jalapeño pepper (*or a hotter pepper if you like!*)

1/4 small white onion

2 dried chipotle chiles, *stemmed and seeded*

2 dried guajillo chiles, *stemmed and seeded*

1 C. cilantro

Salt

Turn oven to broil and put first 4 ingredients on a rimmed baking sheet and broil the vegetables for about 15 minutes, turning each veg a few times to get all sides slightly charred. When cool enough to handle, remove the stem and skin from the tomatoes. Toast the dried chiles in a skillet over high heat until fragrant, 5-7 minutes, then cover with boiling water and soak until soft and pliable. Strain and let cool a few minutes before putting all ingredients except salt in a blender and puree to high heaven. Taste and adjust seasoning to your liking.



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SALSA FRESCA À LA LALA

1/2 small to medium white onion, *diced*

1 lb. tomatoes, *chopped*

1-2 serrano or jalapeño peppers, *seeded and diced*

1/2 C. cilantro, *chopped*

1-2 t. rice wine or white vinegar or lime juice

Salt to taste

Combine all ingredients in a bowl and adjust seasoning to your liking.



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PANZANELLA SALAD À LA LALA

2-3 slices, 1" thick of good quality bread

2 squash, yellow or zucchini, halved lengthwise (optional)

2-3 T. EVOO or schmaltz

1 1/2 lb. garden tomatoes, chopped into big pieces

2 cucumbers, peeled and sliced thick

1/2 onion, sliced

1-2 peppers sweet or hot, sliced

Salt and pepper

Vinaigrette:

2 T. sherry or red wine vinegar

1 T. Dijon mustard

2-3 T. EVOO

1 clove garlic minced (optional)

Start by putting the chopped tomatoes in a colander set over a bowl. Season the tomatoes with about a teaspoon of salt and let sit for about 30 minutes.

While the tomatoes are sweating, brush both sides of the bread and squash, if using, with oil or schmaltz and toast under broiler or in a grill pan until both sides are golden brown. Cut the toasted bread into big chunks and the squash into 1" pieces. Season with salt and pepper and set aside.

After the tomatoes have released a few tablespoons of juice, add the vinegar, mustard and garlic, if using, to the tomato juice and whisk. Continue whisking while adding the EVOO in a thin stream until emulsified. Season with salt and pepper and adjust other flavors to your liking.

Put all ingredients in a large bowl and toss with the vinaigrette. Serve immediately.



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GAZPACHO ANDALUZ À LA LALA

1 thick slice good quality bread, crusts removed

2 cucumbers, peeled, seeded and chopped

2 lb. ripe tomatoes, chopped

1 clove garlic, peeled and chopped

2 T. sherry vinegar

1/2 C. EVOO

Salt and pepper

Garnish (optional):

Chopped sweet or hot pepper

Chopped cucumber

Diced tomatoes

Toasted croutons

Soak the bread in cold water to cover until soft, about 15 minutes. Drain and squeeze out excess moisture and put into a blender with all remaining ingredients except the oil. Puree until smooth then add the oil in a thin stream until incorporated. Taste and season with salt and pepper.

You can serve it as is, or strain in through a fine mesh strainer for a smoother soup.

Serve chilled and topped with garnishes if you like some texture and color.



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ADOBO (FOOD AND WINE, May 2020)

6 dried guajillo chiles, *stemmed and seeded*
4 dried ancho chiles, *stemmed and seeded*
4 dried cascabel chiles, *stemmed and seeded*
1 large, white onion, *peeled and roughly chopped*
10-15 garlic cloves, *peeled*
2 T. ginger, *peeled and chopped*
8 C. water

2 T. distilled white vinegar
1 1/t t. black pepper
1 1/2 T. dried oregano
1/2 t. ground cumin
1/2 t. ground cinnamon
1/4 t. ground cloves
6-8 thyme sprigs
3-4 bay leaves

Toast all of the dried chiles in a cast iron or other large skillet over medium heat until fragrant, about 5-10 minutes.

Put the toasted chiles, onion, garlic and ginger into a large pot and cover with 6 c. of water. Bring to a boil and cook for about 10 minutes until the chiles are softened, stirring occasionally.

Drain and put the solids into a blender. Add to the blender the remaining ingredients and 2 cups of water and blend until very smooth, about a minute.

Let cool and chill, covered until ready to use.

Marinate meat from 4 hours or overnight for best flavor development.



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