



# Recipes From Chef Lois Ellen Frank, PhD



## Delicious Pinto Bean and Spinach Tacos

### Ingredients:

- 3 medium Roma tomatoes, diced (approximately 1 cup)
- ½ large white onion, diced (approximately ½ cup chopped onion)
- 2 teaspoons garlic, blackened and finely chopped (approximately 8 cloves)
- 3 cups fresh spinach, coarsely chopped
- 1½ cups pinto beans, cooked (fresh or 1 15½-ounce can)
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt
- Pinch of freshly ground black pepper

### Directions:

Heat a small cast-iron skillet over high heat until hot. Add the garlic cloves and cook until they start to blacken. Toss and lightly blacken on all sides. Remove from heat and place into a small bowl to cool. Once the garlic cloves have cooled, finely chop them.

Heat a medium to large cast-iron pan over medium-high heat until it is hot, and then add the tomatoes, onion, and garlic and cook for 2 to 3 minutes, stirring constantly to prevent burning. Add the chopped spinach and cook for another 2 minutes. Then add the cooked pinto beans, kosher salt, and a pinch of black pepper and cook for 2 minutes, stirring constantly to prevent burning.

Serve in your favorite corn or flour tortilla. I like this dish with either corn tortillas or the gordita-size flour tortillas. Top with freshly made pico de gallo salsa and homemade guacamole. Serve immediately.

*Makes 6 tacos*

## Corn Tortillas

The corn masa used for corn tortillas is a treated corn that has gone through a nixtamalization process. This process involves soaking the corn and cooking it in an alkaline solution of limewater or wood ash. The corn is then washed and hulled.

The hulled corn can be left whole, creating hominy corn or posole, or it can be ground into a masa and used fresh to make tortillas or tamales. The masa can also be dried and ground into a flour.

Nixtamalized corn has several benefits over unprocessed corn. It is more easily ground, its nutritional value is increased, and both its flavor and aroma are improved.

Corn tortillas are readily available in all supermarkets today and are certainly an option when making taco dishes, but I would encourage you to make your own homemade corn tortillas if you can. In the time it takes you to go to the store and buy them, you could have made them. They are that easy to make.

### Ingredients:

- 2 cups corn masa flour (this can be found in your supermarket in the Latin food section)
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt
- 1½ to 2 cups warm water

### Directions:

In a medium mixing bowl, combine the corn flour, salt, and water and mix together until you have formed a dough. You can do this with a spoon, but I always use my hands.

After the ingredients are completely mixed, use your hands to form balls just smaller than golf balls and set aside.

Preheat your seasoned cast-iron skillet so that it is very hot.

Using a tortilla press, place one ball in the center of the tortilla press and press down to make one corn tortilla. I use a plastic bag that I cut with a circle stencil that matches the size of my tortilla press. Then I place the corn masa ball in between two plastic circles so that it doesn't stick to the tortilla press.

Remove the tortilla from the plastic and place on the cast-iron skillet. Cook the first side of the tortilla for 45 seconds to 1 minute, and then turn over and cook for approximately 35 to 45 seconds until it puffs. That is the sign that the tortilla is done.

Place the cooked tortilla in a kitchen towel inside a basket or bowl and prepare the next tortilla following the same steps. Stack the tortillas on top of each other to keep them warm inside the towel.

Serve warm with your favorite taco recipe.

*Makes approximately 12 taco-size tortillas*



## Fresh Apple, Raisin, and Pecan Salad

I love salads. This salad is very refreshing and quite delicious. It combines the sweetness of the apples and raisins with the tartness of the lime and chile dressing, and the pecans add a delightful crunch. Everyone we make this simple salad for loves it. I think you will enjoy it too.

### Ingredients:

#### For the Salad:

- 6 cups salad greens
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup dark or golden raisins
- 2 medium Fuji apples, finely sliced
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup pecans, toasted and chopped
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup sunflower, radish, or microgreen sprouts (optional)

### Directions:

In a medium salad bowl, combine the salad greens, raisins, and sliced apples and gently toss together.

In a separate mixing bowl, combine the agave, chile powder, fresh lime juice, Dijon mustard, salt, and pepper. Mix together well with a whisk until all of the ingredients are completely combined.

Pour the salad dressing over the greens and toss well. Top the salad with the chopped nuts and the sprouts. Drizzle a little of the dressing around the greens and serve immediately.

*Serves 6*

#### For the Dressing:

- 6 tablespoons agave syrup
- 3 teaspoons red chile powder (mild)
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup freshly squeezed lime juice (approximately 6 limes)
- 2 tablespoons Dijon mustard (the smooth kind)
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon kosher salt
- Pinch of freshly ground black pepper



## Hand-Harvested American Indian Wild Rice Saute

### Ingredients:

- Olive oil spray
- 1 medium yellow onion, diced (approximately 1 cup)
- 2 teaspoons garlic, blackened and finely chopped (approximately 8 cloves of garlic)
- 8 white mushrooms, washed, dried, and thinly sliced (approximately 2 cups)
- 12 to 14 brown cremini mushrooms, washed, dried, and thinly sliced (approximately 2 cups)
- ½ cup dried tart cherries or dried cranberries
- ½ cup fresh or frozen corn kernels
- 2 cups cooked wild rice (see note)
- ½ teaspoon kosher or sea salt
- Pinch of freshly ground black pepper
- 4 tablespoons fresh green scallions, finely sliced (approximately 3 to 4 scallions)

### Directions:

Heat a small cast-iron skillet over high heat until hot. Add the garlic cloves and cook until they start to blacken. Toss and lightly blacken on all sides. Remove from heat and place into a small bowl to cool. Once the garlic cloves are cooled, finely chop them.

Heat a medium to large cast-iron pan over medium to high heat until hot but not smoking. Season lightly with the olive oil spray, and then add the onions and saute, stirring for 4 minutes to prevent burning. Add the blackened garlic and saute for 2 more minutes, stirring constantly to prevent burning. Add the mushrooms and saute, stirring for 4 to 6 minutes to prevent burning. Add the dried tart cherries or cranberries and stir. Cook for another 2 to 3 minutes and then add the corn kernels. Stir and cook for another 1 to 2 minutes. Add the cooked rice, salt, and pepper. Stir constantly for 2 more minutes or until completely hot. Remove from heat, garnish with fresh sliced scallions, and serve immediately.

**Note:** 1 cup dried wild rice equals 3 cups cooked rice. Manoomin, or wild rice, is a Native American grain that is part of the Ojibwe communities and native to the Great Lakes regions including Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, North Dakota, and Canada. This heirloom rice is hand harvested by canoe as it has been for generations and grows naturally in the lakes of these areas. It can be purchased from Native Harvest at 218-375-4602 or at [NativeHarvest.com](http://NativeHarvest.com).



# Roasted Sweet Potatoes With Maple Syrup and Red Chile

## Ingredients:

- 3 medium to large sweet potatoes, washed and cut in half lengthwise
- 1½ cups water
- 1 cup pure maple syrup
- 2 teaspoons red chile powder (mild to medium)
- 1 medium to large lime, freshly squeezed into lime juice

## Directions:

Preheat oven to 400 F. Place the cut sweet potatoes, open side down, on a sheet pan or baking dish and add ¾ cup water. Cook for 20 minutes. Remove from oven and add the remaining ¾ cup water to the bottom of the pan. The water will evaporate, or nearly evaporate, from the pan. Return to the oven and cook for another 20 minutes.

While the potatoes are cooking, in a medium mixing bowl, combine the maple syrup, red chile powder, and lime juice and whisk until completely mixed. Set aside.

After the sweet potatoes have cooked for the second 20 minutes, remove them from the oven and turn over so that the open side is facing up and the skin side is down. Using a sharp knife, score each sweet potato at a diagonal 4 times. Score the sweet potatoes all the way down to the skin but do not pierce the skin on the bottom. Then score again 4 times in the other direction, again all the way down to the skin without piercing it. You should have a crisscross design on each sweet potato. Take 1½ to 2 tablespoons of the maple syrup mixture and drizzle completely over each sweet potato. Allow the mixture to soak into the sweet potato. Return the pan to the oven and bake for another 10 minutes.

Remove the pan from the oven and place a sweet potato onto each plate. Top with the wild rice saute and drizzle a little of the remaining maple syrup mixture around the outside of each sweet potato. Serve immediately.

*Serves 6*



My name is Lois Ellen Frank, and I am the chef/owner of Red Mesa Cuisine in Santa Fe, N.M. I am passionate about cooking ancestral Native American ingredients and educating people on the intersection of food and culture. I believe food has a story of how it nurtured our ancestors and sustained generations. Corn, beans, and squash, also called the Three Sisters, are connected to our culture as Native people. Many people are unaware of the contribution Native people have made to the foods we eat every day, including chiles, tomatoes, potatoes, vanilla, cacao, and the Three Sisters. When we prepare these foods, we revitalize everything associated with them. And when we feed people, we nurture them while honoring our ancestors. The recipes featured here use Native ingredients from tribes throughout the Americas. These ingredients are some of the foods that were a part of the trade routes that existed among tribes for millennia. These recipes are delicious, easy to make, and nutritious. They feed the body and nurture the soul. Food is our medicine. It sustains us. I hope you will use these recipes and share them with family and friends.



**Lois Ellen Frank, PhD**, (Kiowa/Sephardic) is a Native American chef based in Santa Fe, N.M. She is a Native foods historian, a culinary anthropologist, an educator, a James Beard Award-winning cookbook author, a photographer, and an organic gardener. She is the chef and owner of Red Mesa Cuisine, LLC, a Native American catering company specializing in the revitalization of ancestral Native American cuisine with a modern twist, where she cooks with Diné chef Walter Whitewater. Dr. Frank has spent more than 30 years documenting and working with the foods and lifeways of Native American communities in the Southwest. This lengthy immersion in Native American communities culminated in her book *Foods of the Southwest Indian Nations*, featuring traditional and contemporary recipes, which won her the James Beard Award in the Americana category. She was one of the first Native American chefs and cookbook authors to win this award.

Dr. Frank works with the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine on a program entitled the Power To Heal Diabetes: Food for Life in Indian Country (see [NativePowerPlate.org](http://NativePowerPlate.org) for more information). This program promotes the ancestral Native American diet for health and wellness in Native communities in the United States. Dr. Frank partners with the New Mexico Department of Health to provide ancestral, healthy food trainings to Native Americans to support healthy lifestyles and food sovereignty in Native communities. She is a featured cooking instructor at the Santa Fe School of Cooking, where she teaches classes on Native American cuisine with Chef Whitewater. Dr. Frank is an adjunct professor at the Institute of American Indian Arts, teaching students from tribal communities all over the Americas about indigenous concepts of Native American foods and how to prepare Native American recipes for health and wellness in Native communities. Since 2005, she has been working with the Cultural Conservancy, an indigenous-led nonprofit organization, as an adviser, food educator, and chef. She now serves on the board of directors, as well.

For more information or to contact Chef Lois Ellen Frank, PhD, directly:

Lois Ellen Frank, PhD  
7 Avenida Vista Grande, Suite B7-147, Santa Fe, NM 87508  
Phone: 505-466-6306; Cell: 505-690-2009  
Email: [nativecooking@gmail.com](mailto:nativecooking@gmail.com)  
Web: [RedMesaCuisine.com](http://RedMesaCuisine.com)



*All recipes ©Lois Ellen Frank, 2020*  
*Photographs by Chef Lois Ellen Frank, PhD*

**PhysiciansCommittee™**  
for Responsible Medicine



**NativePowerPlate.org**

20377-NTR • 20200813