



Sweet Potato Salad with Caramelized Onions, Watercress and Guajillo Chile Dressing

Ensalada de Camote con Cebollas Caramelizadas y Chile Guajillo

Recipe from "Mexico Everyday" by Rick Bayless

Comments from Kirsten West

What makes this salad so delicious is the wonderful dressing. However if you have your own favorite homemade dressing, it will work just as well. Remember, if you use a commercial dressing, all the healthy properties of this dish will be wiped out in one fell swoop because of all the chemical additives they contain.

INGREDIENTS

For the *Guajillo* Chile Dressing:

¾ cup	vegetable oil, olive oil or a mixture of the two
2 medium	(1/2 oz. total) dried <i>guajillo</i> chiles (you can also use New Mexico chiles)
2	garlic cloves peeled and cut into quarters
¼ cup	sherry vinegar (balsamic adds sweetness, champagne or white wine vinegar adds lightness, but the richness of the sherry is my favorite)
	salt
1	large onion, cut into ½ inch cubes
3 medium	(about 2 pounds) sweet potatoes (<i>camote amarillo</i>), peeled and cut into ½ inch cubes
2 bunches	watercress (or verdolaga or your favorite greens)

DIRECTIONS

Pour oil into a very large (12 inches) skillet and set over medium heat. When the oil is warm, add the chiles and garlic. Turn and stir until the chiles are toasty smelling, about 30 seconds (if the oil isn't too hot). Remove from the heat.

Transfer the chiles to a blender jar (leave the oil and the garlic in the pan). Add the vinegar and a scant teaspoon salt and blend 30 seconds. When the oil and garlic are cool (5-10 minutes), add to the blender; set the skillet aside without washing. Blend the dressing until smooth. Pour into a jar with a secure lid.

Return the skillet (it will have a light coating of oil) to medium heat and add the onion. Cook, stirring regularly until soft and richly browned, 9-10 minutes. Add the sweet potatoes, ½ cup of the re-shaken dressing and 1 tsp salt. Stir well. Cover and cook until the sweet potatoes are tender, about 10 minutes. Uncover; remove from heat and let cool-most of the dressing will be absorbed into the potatoes. Taste and season with additional salt if necessary.

Break the large stems of the watercress (you should have 8 loosely packed cups). Divide among eight plates, forming it into "nests". Scoop a portion of the sweet potato mixture into each nest. Drizzle a little dressing over the watercress. Serve right away.



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