

Hints for Homemakers

by SONDRA REID

Bride's First Meal -- Easy!

A bride's first dinner party often is a frightening experience, but today's young marrieds constantly prove it can be a pleasure.

The key guidepost on the path to success is planning. The menu should be worked out well in advance. And not just any menu. It should be adapted to the bride's ability and time budget.

Select a theme, if you wish, that can be carried out by the food and table setting. A Mexican party is ideal for informal entertaining and most of the food can be prepared well ahead of party time. The food is the kind that is suitable for either a sit-down or buffet dinner and has an added advantage of being relatively inexpensive.

No Watching

Most of the typical dishes are colorful and look elaborate but go together easily and cook with no pot watching. Chili Chicken With Rice is a spicy but not overpowering blend of chicken and rice cooked in a tomato sauce. Tortillas, a stuffed avocado salad and a dessert complete the meal.

The dessert could be a caramel flan, a custard baked with a sauce on the bottom. When unmolded the sauce shows as a golden glaze on the shimmering custard. It should be chilled well before serving, so last minute preparation is eliminated. Serve the flan on your prettiest platter.

If you want to serve appetizers make them simple yet tasty. Marinated fish is a little different and another prepare-ahead dish that will make it easy for the hostess to enjoy her own party.

CHILI CHICKEN WITH RICE

3-lb. broiler fryer, cut up
Salt, pepper
Chili powder
3 tsp. oil

1 med. onion, sliced
1/2 green pepper, chopped

1 clove garlic, crushed
2 6-oz. cans tomato paste
3 cups water
2 tsp. salt
2 tsp. chili powder
1 cup rice

1 cup grated Cheddar
Season chicken with salt, pepper and chili powder. Saute in oil until browned on all sides. Drain off excess fat. Stir in onion, green pepper, garlic, tomato paste, water, 2 tsp. salt and chili powder. Cover and cook over low heat 30 min., or until chicken is tender.

Remove chicken and stir in rice. Continue to cook over low heat until rice is tender and liquid absorbed, about 25 min. Arrange chicken over rice and sprinkle cheese over all. Broil 4 in. from heat source, 4 to 5 min., or until cheese is melted and lightly browned. Makes 4 servings.

AVOCADO SALAD

1/2 cup ripe olives
4-oz. can pimiento
1/2 cup sliced celery
1 cup French dressing
2 avocados

Cut olives into wedges and pimiento into strips. Combine olives, pimiento and celery. Pour French dressing over mixture and refrigerate a few hours. Drain vegetables. Cut avocados in halves and remove seeds. Fill cavities with equal amounts of vegetable mixture. Makes 4 servings.

MEXICAN FLAN

1/2 cup sugar
4 eggs
1/3 cup sugar
1/8 tsp. salt
1 tall can evaporated milk
1 tsp. vanilla or 1 1/2 tsp. brandy

Place 1/2 cup sugar in a 1-qt. baking pan and place over moderate heat.



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Stir constantly until sugar is melted and turns to a deep golden color. Tip pan to coat sides. Cool while preparing custard.

Beat eggs to blend yolks and whites and blend in 1/3 cup sugar and salt. Beat in undiluted evaporated milk and vanilla or brandy. Pour into prepared pan. Place in shallow pan of hot water and bake at 350 deg. about 1 hr., or until knife inserted in center comes out clean. Chill well. To serve, turn out on serving dish. Makes 4 to 6 servings.

MARINATED SEA BASS

1 lb. sea bass fillets
1/2 tsp. oregano
1 tsp. salt
1 pickled chile, optional
1 large onion, thinly sliced
2 cups lemon juice

Cut fish in strips 1/4 in. thick and 1 1/2 in. long. In a flat bottomed glass dish place a layer of fish, sprinkle with oregano and salt. Chop chile fine if used and sprinkle over fish. Separate onion slices into rings and arrange same on top of fish. Cover with part of lemon juice. Repeat layers until all ingredients are used. Refrigerate for at least 6 hr., preferably overnight. Serve on wood picks with a bowl of cocktail sauce, if wanted.

Marc Wilkinson

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