

The spirit of Mexico

Tequila is
on the rise
just in time for
Cinco de Mayo

BY ROSEMARY BLACK

Food

One Great Dish BY ISABEL FORGANG

Try shrimp, lots of Mayo

For holiday, Cinco your teeth
into this spicy chipotle dish

Since Cinco de Mayo celebrates the victory of an outnumbered band of Mexicans over the mighty French army, Maya's *camarones al chipotle* is a perfect dish to serve for the occasion. It's blend of French technique — flambeeing the shrimp — and such typical Mexican ingredients as chipotle chilies in adobo, tequila, *crema fresca* and black beans. The sauce and black bean puree can be made in advance, so the final dish comes together in just minutes, leaving you with plenty of time to toast the holiday with chilled margaritas. ♦

Maya, 1151 First Ave., (212) 585-1818



HOT COMBO Shrimp are given a French-style flambe.

KEITH REDFORD

CAMARONES AL CHIPOTLE (TEQUILA FLAMBE SHRIMP)

Serves 4

FOR THE BLACK BEAN PUREE:

- 1/2 cup chopped bacon
- 1 tablespoon lard or solid vegetable shortening
- 1 cup chopped Spanish onion
- 1 cup fresh epazote leaves or 1/4 cup dried epazote, optional
- Chicken stock or water, to cover beans
- 1/2 pound dried black beans
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

FOR THE CHIPOTLE SAUCE:

- 1/2 cup crema fresca (or substitute 1/2 cup sour cream mixed with 2 tablespoons heavy cream)
- 1/2 cup chopped, seeded tomato
- 1 to 2 tablespoons canned chipotle chilies in adobo
- 1 tablespoon chopped cilantro
- 2 tablespoons soft goat cheese
- 1/4 cup chopped Spanish onion
- 1 to 2 tablespoons honey, or to taste

- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

FOR THE SHRIMP:

- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 teaspoon canola oil
- 2 pounds jumbo shrimp, peeled, deveined
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 2 tablespoons tequila
- Grated cotija or Parmesan cheese, for garnish

Make the black bean puree: In a large pot, heat the bacon and lard until the lard is melted and the bacon begins to render fat. Add the onion and epazote leaves, if using, and sauté until the onion is softened, 10 to 15 minutes. Carefully add enough stock or water to cover the beans by at least an inch or two. Cover and bring to a boil. Add the beans,

Lower heat and simmer, covered loosely, stirring occasionally, until the beans are very tender, about 1 hour. Season beans with salt and pepper. Drain beans, reserving cooking liquid.

In a blender or food processor, puree the beans, adding cooking liquid as needed for desired consistency. A good proportion is 1/2 cup liquid to 1 cup of cooked beans. You can store the puree, refrigerated, up to 3 days.

Make the chipotle sauce: In a food processor or blender, combine all the sauce ingredients and blend to a smooth puree. Adjust seasoning to taste with honey. Using a rubber spatula, force the sauce through a medium-mesh sieve placed over a bowl. This sauce can be stored for up to 3 days, tightly covered, in the refrigerator.

Make the shrimp: In a large skillet, heat the butter and oil over medium heat. Season shrimp with salt and pepper and add to the skillet. Carefully add the tequila. Tilt the skillet to ignite the tequila, and when the flames die out, stir in 1/4 cup of the

chipotle sauce. Cook until the shrimp are cooked through, about 2 minutes.

To serve, warm remaining chipotle sauce and divide among four plates. Place a tablespoon of black bean puree on the sauce. Divide shrimp evenly among the plates, arranging them spoke-fashion around the puree.

Notes to the cook

Side dishes. At Maya, this dish is served atop *huaraches*, a deep-fried corn tortilla "sandwich" with a filling of black-bean puree and soft shredded cheese. For a simpler version, let the chipotle sauce and bean puree be the base for the dish. A frijole salad, lightly dressed with lemon juice, salt and pepper adds just the right touch.