

Sopa Seca: Mexican Noodle Casserole

*This recipe won the 'Chef of the evening' award in July 2007.
Submitted by Sharon Aldrich.*

1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil, plus extra for pan
12 ounces fideos (bundled vermicelli)
1 medium onion, chopped
3 cloves garlic, minced
1 teaspoon ground coriander
1 teaspoon dried oregano, preferably Mexican
1 teaspoon New Mexican chili powder
1 bay leaf
1 1/2 cups canned whole tomatoes
1 to 2 chipotles en adobo sauce, minced
1 1/2 cups chicken broth, homemade, or low-sodium canned
1 teaspoon kosher salt
Freshly ground black pepper
2 cups shredded smoked turkey
1 cup coarsely grated cheddar cheese (4 ounces)
Mexican crema, or sour cream thinned with a bit of milk, optional

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees F.

Brush a 9-inch square baking dish with oil. Heat the extra-virgin olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the fideos and cook, turning them with tongs, until golden brown on both sides, about 5 minutes. Transfer the bundles and any broken pieces to a plate.

Add the onion to the skillet and cook over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until golden brown, about 8 minutes. Stir in the garlic, coriander, oregano, chili powder, and bay leaf, and cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Crush the tomatoes over the pot with your hand and add them to the pot along with their juices. Add the chipotles, increase the heat to high, and cook until thickened, about 2 minutes. Stir in the broth, the toasted fideos, salt, and pepper, to taste. Bring mixture to a boil, reduce heat, and simmer gently, uncovered, breaking up the fideos with a spoon, for about 5 minutes. Stir in the turkey.

Remove the bay leaf. Transfer the mixture to the prepared baking dish, sprinkle the grated cheese over the top, and cover loosely with foil. Bake until the cheese melts and the casserole is hot through and through, about 20 minutes. If desired, serve with some crema drizzled over the top.

Recipe from FoodNetwork.com