



Lobster Arepas

Arepas are eaten in many South American countries at almost every meal. Made of a flat corn cake and eaten plain or filled with cheese and/or a variety of meats, this handheld pita-like treat is perfect for any occasion. In this case, we decided to put a modern summery twist on the Latin American classic by filling it with a lobster salad. Beware, though – eating this can be a messy endeavor! (That just makes it more fun, in our opinion.)

Makes 4 arepas

Ingredients

For the vinaigrette:

¼ cup grapeseed oil
Juice of 2 lemons
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper, or to taste
Pinch of dried oregano
Salt and pepper to taste

For the lobster salad:

1 pound of cooled lobster meat (meat of about 2 medium lobsters)
1 green papaya cut into 1-inch batons
1 red pepper cut into 1/8" dice
1 jicama cut into 1/8" dice
8 leaves of leafy green lettuce
1 tbsp chopped cilantro

For the arepas:

7 ½ cups lukewarm water
2 tablespoons salt
Pinch of sugar
6 cups pre-cooked white cornmeal, or harina pan
Vegetable oil for pan frying

Preparation

Prepare the arepas:

In a large bowl, combine the water, salt, and sugar. Slowly add the cornmeal and mix by hand until the dough starts to come together. If it's too dry, add water. If it's too sticky, add more cornmeal. Moisten your hands and create small balls by hand that are about 2 inches in diameter. Flatten the balls with your palms, flipping them back and forth until the disks are about 3 ½ inches wide and ½ inch thick. Use a ½ inch of oil in a large skillet on medium high heat. Fry the arepas in batches. They are done once they are golden brown. Cover them, keeping them warm in a low oven until ready to use.

[Chef's Note: Harina pan, the pre-cooked and specially milled cornmeal, can be found in many Latin-American stores, or in the specialty aisle of some supermarkets. Any extra arepa dough can be formed into disks and stored in the freezer, unfried, between sheets of parchment paper.]

Prepare the lobster filling:

Chop the cooked and cooled lobster meat into 1-inch chunks. Place those chunks in a large mixing bowl and add the sliced papaya, the diced jicama and red pepper. To prepare the vinaigrette, whisk the lemon juice with the mustard, oregano, cayenne, salt, and pepper. Once they are combined, add the

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grapeseed oil and whisk. Lightly toss the lobster, jicama, red pepper, and papaya with enough of the vinaigrette to bring it together, being careful to not drown the lobster. You want enough vinaigrette to coat the lobster, but not too much to leave a puddle. After the lobster is dressed with the vinaigrette, add the cilantro and stir to incorporate.

Service

Slit open the arepa and line with one leaf of the green lettuce, allowing some of the lettuce to show through. Fill the arepa with the lobster salad. You may serve any remaining vinaigrette at table and allow guests to add any additional vinaigrette if desired. Remember to have a stack of napkins ready for each of your guests.

Variations

These arepas can be filled with almost anything imaginable. From fish to beef to slaws to cheese, they are a fantastic meal or snack, regardless of the occasion.

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