

# ORZO MEXICANA CON ESQUITES

## Orzo with Pepitas Pesto and Roasted Corn

Serves 2-4

- 2 poblanos
- 2 ears corn, shucked
- 2 limes, zested and juiced, reserved separately

### For Orzo

- 6 oz (about 4 med.) tomatillos
- 4 cloves garlic, peeled
- 1-2 serranos
- ¼ C pepitas
- ½ C diced onion
- 1 tsp ground coriander
- ½-1 tsp salt or fish sauce
- 1 bu radish tops
- ¾ C roughly chopped cilantro, mostly tender stems

### For Esquites

- 2 Tbsp neutral oil
- 1 tsp whole cumin seeds
- 1 Tbsp ground ancho, New Mexico, or chipotle chile, (or other favorite ground chile)
- 1 tsp ground coriander
- pinch ea: cloves, cinnamon
- 2 cloves garlic, pressed or minced
- ≈ ⅓ C orange juice, plus the zest from ≈ half of the orange if it's large
- 2 tsp lime juice
- 1 tsp agave syrup or honey

- 5 oz orzo

**garnishes:** sliced radish  
diced/sliced avocado dressed with some lime juice  
cilantro leaves  
powdery shower of *Pecorino*, *queso fresco* or *añejo*

Under the broiler char the poblanos and shucked corn, aiming to just get some browned spots on the corn (without overcooking). When cool enough to handle, remove corn from the cobs; peel and seed the poblanos.

Simmer the serranos, tomatillos, and garlic until softened, about 5 minutes. Take vegetables out of water, and when cool enough to handle remove the seeds and ribs from the chile if you prefer less heat. Add more water to the pot if necessary to cook the pasta.

Meanwhile, in a cast iron pan roast the pepitas over medium heat, stirring frequently for about 3 minutes until they begin to pop and are slightly golden. Remove from pan to the bowl of a food processor.

While this pan is still quite warm, add the *Esquites* oil and cumin seeds. When they begin to darken, stir in the rest of the spices and heat until all is well-moistened and fragrant. Scrape into a small saucepan and stir in garlic, then the juices, sweetener, orange zest and a big pinch of the lime zest. Taste for sweet/sour balance. Set corn on top and set aside. Wipe out the cast iron pan.

Blend pepitas until they are powdered. Add cooked vegges, onion, ground cumin, coriander, and process until fairly smooth. OR pulse to desired chunkiness.

Start heating pasta water. Reheat cast iron pan and pour in Orzo sauce to simmer on medium for 8 minutes, stirring to prevent eruptions and the bottom sticking. Keep warm. Blend radish greens and cilantro to a paste, then blend in poblano and salt. Whisk this into the pepita blend.

Cook orzo with plenty of salt until quite *al dente*, only about 5 minutes. Spoon it into the pepita mixture along with 2 - 3 tablespoons lime juice and the zest. Add pasta water as necessary to have a smooth sauce. The flavor should keep a bright tartness.

Fold the corn into the chile/orange salsa, and have it gently reheating at the same time.

To serve, make a nest of the orzo and fill the center with the *esquites*. Garnish with chosen items. ¡Buen Provecho!