

CHANCLETAS CON PICADILLO EN CHILMOLE

CHAYOTE STUFFED WITH PORK IN CHARRED CHILE SAUCE

Chancleta is a Spanish word meaning "slipper", and is applied to this dish as a whimsical reference to the shape of the *chayote* when cut in half. *Chayote* – a member of the *Cucurbitaceae* family that includes squash, melons and cucumbers – is most likely indigenous to the southern Maya territory between Mexico and Guatemala. It has been cultivated in Mesoamerica since at least the time of the conquest and probably well before, although supporting archaeological records have yet to be found. The fruit is high in amino acids, as well as calories and carbohydrates. *Chancletas* typically feature the *chayote*, but eggplant or small patty pan squash may be substituted satisfactorily. The meat filling is generally a simple concoction of ground pork or beef browned with onion and bell peppers, but for this version we have incorporated another Yucatecan classic – *Picadillo en Chilmole* – a zippy mixture featuring Yucatán's famous charred *chile* seasoning blend.

10 SERVINGS

• 5 *chayotes*

• 1 recipe *Picadillo en Chilmole*
• 3/4 cups (175ml) bread crumbs
• 1/4 cup (60ml) vegetable oil, olive oil or melted butter

• 1 recipe *Salsa de Jitomate II*

🍴 PREPARE THE CHAYOTES 🍴

STEP 1 SLICE THE CHAYOTES IN HALF

LENGTHWISE following the line of the natural indentation at the base. Place *chayotes* in a large pot of boiling, salted water. Return to a boil, reduce to a simmer, cover and cook about 20-30 minutes or until just tender when pierced with a fork. Remove to drain, and set aside to cool slightly.

🍴 STUFF AND BAKE 🍴

STEP 2 MEANWHILE, PREHEAT OVEN to 400°F (205°C). With a spoon or melon baller, remove the soft center seed as well as some of the pulp in the middle of each *chayote*. (How much is a question of taste, depending on the proportion of *chayote*-to-meat that you prefer.) Stuff each *chayote* with the *Picadillo en Chilmole* and place on a greased baking sheet or shallow baking pan. Top with a sprinkle of bread crumbs, then drizzle on a bit of the oil or butter. Place in the oven and bake until tops are lightly golden, about 20 minutes.

🍴 SERVE 🍴

STEP 3 TO SERVE, either place all *chayotes* together on a serving platter, or one of the halves on each of 10 individual plates; ladle on some of the hot tomato sauce.