

SALSA : K'UUT BI IK

SMOKY & HOT CHILE TABLE SAUCE

This fiery red *chile* table *salsa* is also sometimes known by the Spanish/Mayan hybrid name of *Chile K'uut*. *K'uut* in Mayan means “crushed or pounded” and *ik* is the Mayan word for *chile*. It is impossible to enter a humble Maya home in the pueblos without seeing a pool of this deep red sauce at the bottom of a stone *tamul*, or mortar and pestle. *K'uut bi ik* is virtually the same concept as *Chile Tamulado*, but for some reason it bears a different name, and most cooks use the tiny, dried red *chile seco* (*chile de país*) rather than the *habanero*. The authentic method is to pound and grind the chiles with liquid in a *tamul*, but you may use a blender for faster results. Local cooks often use water instead of sour orange juice, making it one of the simplest *salsas* in Mexico and revealing its ancient origins.

But in spite of its simplicity, it is fragrant, smoky and packs a punch.

10-20 SERVINGS

☞ PREPARE THE SALSA ☞

- **30 *chiles secos* plus 5 to finish**

(*Substitute: 20 chiles de arbol plus 5 to finish*), stemmed and seeded

- **1/2 cup (115ml) water or *naranja***

***agria* juice** (*Also known as sour orange or Seville orange. Substitute: 2 parts lime juice, 1 part each orange juice and grapefruit juice*)

- **Pinch sea salt**

STEP 1 PLACE ALL BUT RESERVED *CHILES* along with water or juice and salt in a blender. Liquefy on high for 2-3 minutes or until *chiles* are pulverized.

STEP 2 ADD RESERVED *CHILES* to the blender jar and pulse lightly so that small pieces of the *chile* are visible in the sauce.

STEP 3 POUR *SALSA* into a small serving bowl and allow to rest at room temperature for at least 15 minutes prior to serving in order to intensify flavors. The *salsa* keeps well refrigerated for 2 weeks.