

PIB-X'CATIK

BLOND CHILES STUFFED WITH COCHINITA PIBIL

The local *x'catik* is a member of the *chile* group known in Latin-American Spanish as *güero*, or “blond”. This category ranges in heat from a puny 2000 to a zippy 10,000 Scoville Heat Units – so you may want to taste it before serving! As with all *chiles*, its fierceness can be tamed by deveining and seeding it. The *x'catik* is primarily grown and distributed in the Yucatán peninsula. Outside Mexico, you can substitute Anaheim, sweet Italian or banana peppers. Like its cousins, the *x'catik* is pale yellow, long, thin and pointed. It is used for flavoring bean dishes, sauces and *escabeches*. While the *poblano* is commonly employed for stuffing in much of the rest of Mexico, in Yucatán the favorite for *rellenos* is the *x'catik*. Cheese or dogfish are popular fillings, but the perennial winner is Yucatán's ubiquitous *Cochinita Pibil*.

10 SERVINGS

🌀 PREPARE THE CHILES 🌀

• **20 large chiles x'catiques** (*Substitute: any blonde chile, such as Anaheim, sweet Italian or banana peppers*)

STEP 1 ROAST THE CHILES over an open flame or in a heavy skillet until generally blackened. Immediately place chiles in a sealable plastic bag and allow to steam for 10 minutes. One by one, remove from the bag; under running water, rub off as much of the charred skin as possible. Carefully slit *chile* down the middle of one side, open and remove seeds and veins, taking care to leave stem intact; set aside and continue with the rest of the *chiles*.

🌀 STUFF AND SERVE 🌀

• **3 cups (about 500g) Cochinita Pibil**, finely shredded
• **One recipe Salsa de Jitomate Yucateca I or Tomate Frito**
• **One recipe Cebollas Encurtidas**

STEP 2 WARM THE COCHINITA PIBIL in its own juices in a skillet or saucepan. Stuff the *chiles* with the shredded meat; tuck meat in tightly and lift sides of *chile* over the top to cover. Arrange two *chiles* on each of 10 individual serving plates, or all together on a large serving platter. Spoon on the hot tomato sauce and serve with *Cebollas Encurtidas*.

NOTE: The stuffed chiles may be prepared in advance, covered with plastic and reheated in a microwave for 1 1/2 minutes just before serving.