

CHEF'S CORNER

Mashed Potato Bar a hit for bar mitzvah guests of all ages

A Mashed Potato Bar can include a wide range of toppings. Ingredients for Lisa's **Ancho Chile Mole** include ancho and guajillo chiles along with raisins, almonds, cinnamon, tomatoes and chopped Mexican chocolate.

Photos and Story by Lisa Glickman

Our son Laz recently turned 12, and that means that very soon I will need to plan for his bar mitzvah celebration. It's a big job making sure he's on top of his Hebrew studies and laying the groundwork for his much-anticipated party to commemorate his becoming a bar mitzvah. He has been studying Hebrew for a couple of years now, and he is really looking forward to his day on the bimah followed by a fun party for his friends and family.

Once he becomes a bar mitzvah, he is old enough to understand and accept the obligations of the commandments. It is traditional for the bar mitzvah to read from the Torah in in synagogue, followed by a casual luncheon for family and guests. Sometimes people also plan a nighttime party with a theme specifically for the bar mitzvah boy, with

entertainment and games tailored to him and his friends. These parties can range from casual gatherings to very elaborate celebrations. Whatever type of affair you choose, planning the food for these parties can be tricky because it must be age-appropriate for the kids as well as something the adults can enjoy too. Pizza, sliders and wings may all be great kid fare, but more mature folks might want a menu that is a bit more sophisticated.

I recently created a "mashed potato bar" that included creamy whipped potatoes along with several tasty toppings that everyone could choose from. The potatoes and toppings resemble a savory sundae bar with offerings that include shredded cheeses, caramelized onions, chopped scallions, toasted pumpkin seeds, sour cream and a spicy-sweet ancho chile mole sauce.

Scoop the potatoes into martini glasses and offer all the toppings in bowls on the buffet so guests can add the extras according to what they like.

The "Mashed Potato Bar" was a hit when I first prepared it, with many of the guests returning for seconds to try variations of all the toppings. They especially loved my homemade ancho chile mole sauce, for which I have included the recipe. Mole is a sauce that originates in Mexico and is a generic name for a number of sauces used in Mexican cuisine. No mole is quite the same and moles can be referred to in many different ways including black, red, yellow, Colorado, green, almendrado or pipian. The sauce is most popular in the central and southern regions of the country. This mole is made with ancho and guajillo chiles along with raisins, almonds, cinnamon, tomatoes and chopped Mexican chocolate. The

HERE ARE SOME OTHER GREAT TOPPING IDEAS:


Vegetables and Cheeses

Mozzarella, cheddar, Mexican or shredded Parmesan | Cottage cheese | Chives | Chopped scallions | Sautéed mushrooms | Caramelized onions | Fresh or frozen peas | Sliced olives | Roasted garlic

Sauces

Flavored sour creams, such as chipotle, truffle or cilantro | Ranch dressing | Sour cream | Seasoned butters | Marinara sauce | Alfredo sauce | Nacho cheese



Mexican chiles, cinnamon, oregano and chocolate can easily be found in a grocery store that has a good Mexican food section. This mole has a deep sweet and spicy flavor and can be used in many ways – from a sauce for grilled meats or vegetables to a topping for egg dishes or your favorite nachos. It takes a bit of work, but it can be made well ahead of time and can easily be frozen for up to a month. 

Lisa Glickman is a private chef and teacher who lives in Bend. She has made TV appearances on COTV in Central Oregon and recently appeared on the Cooking Channel's *The Perfect Three*. She can be reached via her website at lisa@lisaglickman.com.



Ancho Chile Mole

- 8 Ancho chiles
- 8 Guajillo chiles
- ½ cup raisins
- 8 garlic cloves
- 1 large white onion, unpeeled and quartered
- ½ cup shelled almonds
- 1 3-inch canella stick (Mexican cinnamon)
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 6 grinds black pepper
- ½ teaspoon dried thyme
- 1 teaspoon Mexican oregano
- 6 Roma tomatoes
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 tablet Mexican chocolate, chopped
- 3 cups chicken or vegetable stock

Cut the chiles open vertically and remove the stem and seeds. On a hot comal or griddle, “toast” the chiles on both sides, flattening with a spatula, until their skins blister and colors change. Put the chiles in a bowl. Add the raisins. Cover with boiling water and soak for at least 30 minutes until softened. Drain the chiles and raisins (keep some of the liquid) and puree in a food processor, adding a bit of the liquid if needed to form a paste. Strain mixture through a medium sieve or food mill into a bowl. Place unpeeled onion and garlic on griddle and toast until brown. Discard blackened peels and put onion and garlic into food processor. Toast the almonds and canella. Put into food processor with onions and garlic. Add salt, pepper, thyme and oregano. Puree the mixture, adding stock if necessary. Strain the mixture into the bowl with the chilis, pushing on the solids to get as much as possible. Cut the tomatoes in half and toast on griddle. Puree tomatoes and strain into separate bowl. Heat the oil in a large deep pot. Add the chile mixture and cook, stirring for a few minutes. Add the tomato puree and stir for a few minutes more. Add the chocolate and more broth. Lower the heat and simmer for 20 minutes. The sauce should be as thick as heavy cream. Add more stock to thin the sauce if necessary. Taste and adjust seasoning, adding more chile water if you like it spicier!

Exotic and Gourmet toppings

Smoked salmon | Chopped fresh herbs | Pesto | Salsa verde
 Ancho chile mole sauce (recipe follows) |
 Sautéed spinach with garlic | Roasted red peppers |
 Mixed grilled vegetables | Dipping oils | Sliced toasted almonds
 Toasted pumpkin seeds

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