

## And the Salsa Award Goes To... Lupita's Authentic Mexican Restaurant!



By Sharon Bridgeman

There are plenty of restaurants to eat at every day of the week. Some are fancy, some are expensive, and some ... hmmm ...

not so great. I've driven by Lupita's restaurant almost daily, but this time I stopped in for a bite of lunch.

Upon entering, I meet Lupita and her daughter and seat myself, choosing a comfortable spot at the banquet bar. Looking around at the casual surroundings, it's brightly painted walls and hanging banners reminded me of a little place in Baja. Kind of like the corner café that you would find the locals merchants or police officers hanging out—if they aren't, they should be. The chips, salsa, and water were brought to me and I dove right in. I loved the not too spicy salsa. (If someone thought it was too spicy I suggest adding some sour cream to your own) It's

like something I would make. Hmmm, now how was I to get her to divulge the beloved recipe?

After telling her what I might want to order and what were my favorites. Lupita quickly brought me a full plate of carnitas, chili relleno and beef tamale, and—on the side—beans and rice. First the carnitas were tasty and not dry, the chili relleno had that certain spice with a very light bread crust and just enough cheese, and the beef filled tamale was perfection—not a lot of corn on the outside. We swapped cooking ideas while I ate for a little bit and I received some great tips on cooking my own beans and the secret to her salsa—a little more onion, maybe some crushed oregano. She also informed me that she uses no lard in her cooking. Honest home-made cooking, I felt like I was back in my mother's kitchen chatting, and cooking. This is what real home made authentic Mexican food should taste like—home.

For a quick and easy meal, come as you are to Lupita's—located at 9353 Greenback Lane.

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### Cooking with Sharon and Lupita Lupita's Secret Salsa recipe

At Lupita's, they make this by the bucket full (a little much for the average house party). I have pared down this recipe for the readers at home—it makes about 4 ½ cups.

- 1 can 28 ounce whole peeled tomatoes with juice
- 1 Jalapeno cut stem off, do not seed
- 1 tsp crushed Mexican oregano leaves
- 1 whole white onion
- ½ cup firmly packed fresh cilantro (leaves only--no stems)
- ½ tsp granulated garlic
- salt and pepper. (Season to taste.)

In a blender or food processor add all ingredients above. Blend on Pulse to mix.

\*\*Add 6 drops of lemon juice concentrate optional.

Serve with your favorite tortilla chips or as a side for your Authentic Mexican Meal.

## Texas and Caviar

By Micki Sannar

I have always wanted to go to Texas. I would say it has been a life-long goal. I had lived in Japan (twice), visited Europe, hopped around Asia, but never before had I fulfilled my life-long dream of going to Texas.

When I think of Texas, I think of many things. Cowboy hats, country music, pick-up trucks, chili cook offs, famous BBQ, and last, but not leastest, George Bush.

Truthfully, there are two real reasons I wanted to go to Texas. And after my brother and sister-in-law moved there, I had another reason. The first was for the food. Think about it, everyone who has ever been to Texas says that Texas BBQ can't be beat. And because I am a foodie, I needed to find out, first-hand, if the food is really that fantastic. The other reason for visiting Texas was so I could speak all day long with a Texas drawl. You know the kind you do when y'all are from somewhere else.

The first was absolutely true, large plates with lots of knee slappin BBQ goodness. The moment I got off the plane, I could smell the BBQ cookin', and to top it off they even had a

live country-western band playing music right smack-dab in the middle of the Austin Texas Airport food court.

And the drawl; Ohhh, that charming Texas drawl—so totally worth the trip. I would say things like, "Honey (hunny), where y'all from?" In Texas, complete strangers will call you honey, sweetie, sweet potato, and pop tart. Ah felt like ah was home. I went right along in my very best southern drawl. I think they all believed me.

It would not be fair if I did not mention the caviar. What, what is that you say? What does Texas have to do with caviar? Well, huuunny, let me tell ya. Ya'll have not lived until you have tried Texas caviar.

This Texas Caviar Recipe was sent to me by my friend Tiffany. She is not from Texas and I am not even sure if she's ever been to Texas, but the recipe is sure fantastic. I added a few of my own ingredients, and it has become a family favorite. So, Darlin', grab some chips and mix up some caviar. And don't be surprised if you start saying things like, "Huuunny, where y'all from?"

### Texas Caviar

- 2 (15.8 ounce) cans black-eyed peas, drained
- 1 (14.5 ounce) can petite diced tomatoes, drained
- 1 small can of corn
- 1 fresh medium jalapenos, stemmed, seeded and minced
- 1 small onion, cut into small dice
- 2 to 4 cloves fresh chopped garlic
- 1/2 yellow bell pepper, stemmed, seeded and cut into small dice
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh cilantro
- 6 tablespoons red wine vinegar
- 6 tablespoons olive oil (extra virgin)
- 3/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1 1/2 teaspoons ground cumin
- 1 or 2 whole avocado

Mix all ingredients in a medium bowl; cover and refrigerate for a minimum of two hours; then dig in ya'll.

Micki Sannar is a cooking instructor and the Author of Olive Oil Dessert (in bookstores late fall 2008).

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