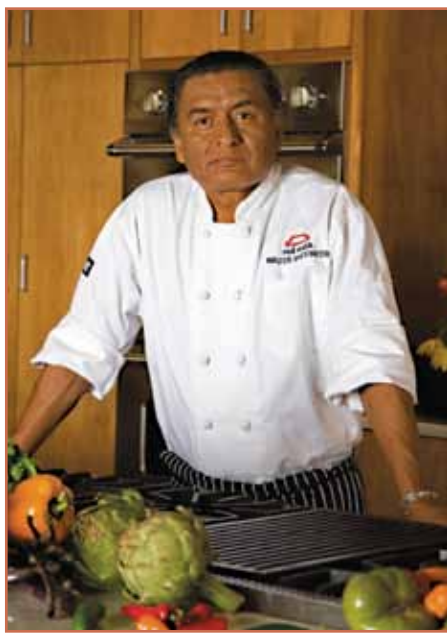


A Celebration of Native Food & Wine

Walter Whitewater, Chef de Cuisine for Red Mesa Cuisine in Santa Fe

Walter Whitewater grew up in Piñon, Arizona, on the Navajo Reservation. In addition to his restaurant experience, he teaches at the Santa Fe School of Cooking and leads various community-based cooking programs. Whitewater is the Chef de Cuisine for Red Mesa and has appeared on a number of TV shows, including “Southwest Cooking with Bobby Flay” and “The Secret Life of Southwest Foods.”



Spicy Corn Soup with Roasted Red Bell Pepper and Chipotle Chile Purée

Serves 6

“There is nothing like the taste of fresh sweet corn,” says Lois Ellen Frank, Ph.D., describing the soup that Walter Whitewater is preparing for the SWAIA dinner. “I usually make this soup from fresh corn during the warm weather months and at harvest time when corn is at its sweetest, but it can be made at any time of the year with organic, frozen sweet corn. Its spicy flavor comes from New Mexico red chile powder and chipotle chile powder. Chipotles are jalapeños that have been dried and then smoked. This medium-size, thick-fleshed chile is smoky and sweet and has a subtle, deep, rounded heat. In Santa Fe, local farmers sell fresh freshly ground New Mexico red and chipotle chile powder.”

4 ears of corn, kernels scraped from the cob, or 3 cups corn kernels (fresh or frozen)
1 yellow onion, diced
1 teaspoon garlic, finely chopped
½ teaspoon dried chipotle chile powder
1 teaspoon New Mexico red chile powder
½ teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon black pepper
6 cups vegetable stock
1 red bell pepper, roasted, peeled, seeded and diced
½ cup sour cream

Prepare the corn by cutting the kernels from the cob. You should have approximately 3 cups of corn kernels from 4 cobs. Save the corncobs and set aside. The cobs will add additional corn flavor to the soup. If using frozen corn, use 3 cups of corn kernels.

In a medium-size saucepan over medium-high heat, add ¼ cup of the vegetables stock and then add the onions. Sauté the onions for 3 to 4 minutes until they are translucent, stirring occasionally to prevent burning. Add the garlic and chipotle chile powder and sauté for 1 more minute. If your pan is too dry, add another ¼ cup of the vegetables stock. Add the corn kernels and sauté for another 3 minutes, stirring constantly. Add the salt, black pepper and the stock and bring to a boil. (If you have cut your corn fresh from the cob, place the reserved cobs into the saucepan at this time.) Once the mixture has boiled, reduce the heat and simmer for 30 minutes. Stir occasionally to prevent the corn kernels from burning or sticking to the bottom of the pan.

While the corn soup is simmering, roast the red bell pepper using the open flame method, then peel, seed and dice it. Place the diced bell pepper into a blender with the chipotle chile powder and the New Mexico red chile powder. Then add sour cream. Blend thoroughly for 1 minute. Pour through a fine sieve and discard the contents of the sieve. Pour the red bell pepper sauce into a plastic squirt bottle and set aside.

Remove the corn soup mixture from the heat, discard the corncobs and set aside. Place the corn soup mixture in a blender and purée for 3 minutes. Pour the mixture through a sieve and discard the contents of the sieve. Return the mixture to a saucepan, and heat over medium heat for 15 minutes, stirring occasionally to prevent burning. Pour into bowls, garnish with some of the red pepper sauce and serve immediately.



Photo: Lois Ellen Frank

Chocolate and Piñon Torte

Serves 12

Says Dr. Lois Ellen Frank: “The Feast Day is one of the biggest celebrations of the year among the Indian Pueblos of New Mexico. To honor their patron saints, the people of each Pueblo gather together. They attend mass in the morning and hold a procession into the plaza, where an altar houses their patron saint. After mass, dressed in ceremonial clothing, ancient traditional dances begin and are offered at various times throughout the day...”

“After mass, many of the women return home to set up for the day’s feast—which they have been preparing for, in most cases, for days—and set the special dishes up on their tables with chairs crowded around them. On each table is a variety of salads, stews, meats, homemade breads and, of course, desserts—both traditional as well as modern dishes.

“During the afternoon, as the dances are going on in the plaza, relatives and visitors drop in and enjoy what foods each household has to offer, express their thanks and leave to go back to the dances. People drop in throughout the day to taste the fine foods at many different houses. It is a festive day filled with warmth and friendliness.

“This recipe is my adaptation of some of the tortes I sampled at different Pueblos, and I serve it a lot in my catering company. I like to serve it with two sauces, a peach sauce from locally grown farmers’ market peaches from the Velarde family’s farm and a hand harvested prickly pear fruit syrup. You can decorate the entire torte and set it out with the sauces for a buffet, or you can slice it and plate it individually for your guests. Either way, it’s a wonderful dessert.”

- 1 cup raw piñon (pine) nuts (walnuts or pecans may be substituted)
- 2 Tablespoons blue cornmeal
- 2 Tablespoons unsalted butter
- 9 ounces semisweet dark chocolate
- 6 egg yolks
- 3/4 cups granulated unbleached organic sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla bean extract or vanilla bean paste
- 1/4 cup confectioners’ sugar
- 2 Tablespoons blue cornmeal, for decoration (optional)

Grease and flour a 9-inch round cake pan. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.

In a food processor, grind the piñon nuts to a very moist nut butter. Add the blue cornmeal and blend again for about 30 seconds, just long enough to combine. In a double boiler over medium-high heat, melt the butter and chocolate together, stirring occasionally so that they melt and blend together evenly. Add to the piñon mixture in the food processor and blend about 1 minute until smooth. Beat the egg yolks, sugar, and vanilla together in a bowl, and add to the other ingredients in the food processor. Blend again until smooth. Do not over mix at this point or the nut oils will be released, making the torte very oily. Always add the egg mixture last. Otherwise, the eggs will curdle from coming in contact with the heated chocolate.

Place the batter into the prepared greased pan and pat down with your fingers until evenly spread in the baking pan. This is a thick batter and you will be able to handle it. Bake approximately 10 to 12 minutes (depending on your oven—convection works well for this torte), or until the cake springs back when the center is touched.

Remove from the oven and place on a wire rack to cool before decorating. This is a dense torte, and to me it resembles dense very moist brownies. I like it very moist, which is why I only cook it for 10 to 12 minutes; if you desire a crisper torte you can cook it slightly longer.

When the torte has cooled, after 20 to 30 minutes, remove it from the pan, and then be creative for the decorating process. You can do individual stencils on each slice or decorate the entire torte. To make the Southwestern motif pictured, cut a stencil out of cardboard. First, dust the cake with confectioners’ sugar using a medium sieve, lightly tapping the sides and moving it in a circular motion around the surface of the torte. Then, carefully holding the stencil as close to the torte’s surface as possible without touching it, sprinkle the blue cornmeal through a sieve over the exposed areas. Carefully remove the stencil without disrupting the design. For a finishing touch, place a few piñon nuts at the corner of each stenciled triangle.

Lois Ellen Frank, Ph.D., Chef and Founder of Red Mesa Cuisine in Santa Fe

Dr. Lois Ellen Frank, Kiowa, is a New Mexico-based chef, author, historian and photographer. Her James Beard Award-winning book *Foods of the Southwest Indian Nations* reflects her in-depth research on Native foods and culture. Frank received her Ph.D. in Culinary Anthropology from the University of New Mexico and currently teaches classes on Native and Southwestern food at the Santa Fe School of Cooking. She is the founder of catering company Red Mesa Cuisine.

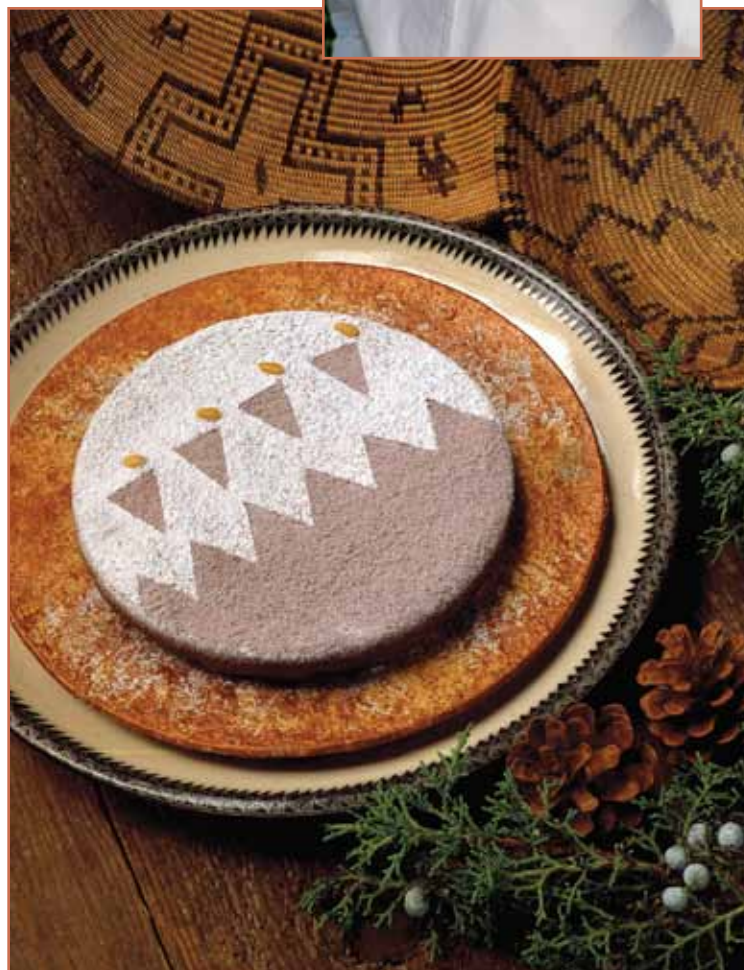


Photo: Lois Ellen Frank