

SALSA DE JITOMATE YUCATECA II

PURÉED COOKED TOMATO SALSA

There are as many recipes for cooked tomato sauces in Mexico as there are for meatloaf in the United States! In Yucatán, the choices are somewhat more narrow. The basic differences between the two most popular ones are that in the first (*Salsa de Jitomate Yucateca I*) the vegetables are charred and the onions caramelized, giving the sauce a wonderfully smoky taste; and in this version, the uncooked vegetables are all pureéd together, then poured into hot oil for the final cooking and thickening. The result is creamy, rich and versatile enough to be served with any dish calling for a cooked tomato sauce.

10-15 SERVINGS

☞ PURÉE THE VEGETABLES ☞

- **1 white onion**, *peeled and coarsely chopped*
- **3 lbs. (1.5 k) tomatoes**, *seeded and coarsely chopped*
- **5 cloves garlic**, *coarsely chopped*
- **1 chile x'catik**, *charred, peeled and seeded*
- **1 Tbs. (15ml) powdered chicken bouillon**
- **2 Tbs. (30ml) tomato paste**
- **1/2 cup (125ml) water**

- **1 Tbs. (15ml) vegetable oil**
- **1 tsp. (5ml) whole orégano Yucateco**, *toasted and ground (Substitute: 1/4 tsp./1.25ml ground Mexican oregano)*
- **1/4 tsp. (1.25ml) ground black pepper**
- **Salt to taste**

STEP 1 WORKING IN BATCHES, place ingredients listed at left in a blender and process until smooth. Transfer batches to a large mixing bowl as you process the remaining ingredients.

☞ COOK THE SAUCE ☞

STEP 2 HEAT OIL IN HEAVY SKILLET until hot but not smoking. Pour in tomato mixture and add oregano and pepper. Bring to a boil; reduce heat and simmer slowly for about 30 minutes or until slightly thickened. Check seasonings. If made in advance, reheat before serving.