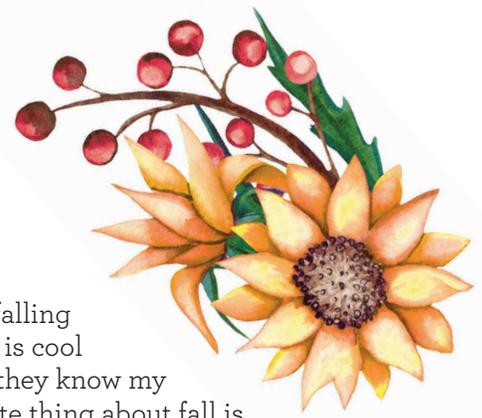


Food for the Soul



Fall is here! Fall is my absolute favorite season. I love watching the leaves falling and filling the streets with their natural reds, oranges, and yellows. The air is cool and crisp. It's also pumpkin season, and if you ask anyone who knows me, they know my obsession with all things pumpkin! If you ask my husband what his favorite thing about fall is he's going to say one thing, football. He loves the game. He also loves inviting people over to watch the game together and making it into a big event that's fun for everyone, including the kids. One way to have a great football get together is food. Food is my jam. I have a great crowd-pleasing recipe that is perfect for a football game get together or any other party. They are called Southwest Egg Rolls, and they are ridiculously amazing.

This recipe is great because you do most of the work ahead of time. The egg rolls need to be frozen at least overnight, before frying or baking them, which leaves you extra time on game day to relax or fix other yummy goodies for your family to enjoy. This recipe may seem daunting at first glance, but it's not too complicated. Plus, once you've made them you will have a freezer full for the season.

SOUTHWEST EGG ROLLS

By: Brandi Carson

Ingredients:

2 medium sized chicken breasts	1 can green chiles
Olive oil for sautéing	1 ¼ cups frozen spinach, heated up, and excess water squeezed out
1 red bell pepper, deseeded and finely diced	½ cup prepackaged or homemade taco seasoning
1 large onion, finely diced	3 cups shredded Pepper Jack, Monterey Jack or other cheddar blend cheese
3-4 medium cloves garlic, minced	10-15 6-inch flour tortillas
1-2 jalapeños, depending on how much heat you want, deseeded and finely diced	6-10 cups oil for frying
1 can or 1 ¼ cups homemade black beans, drained	Toothpicks
1 ¼ cups frozen corn	

Directions:

1. Coat chicken breast with a few tablespoons of taco seasoning, reserve the rest for later.
2. Either heat your grill or sauté pan with oil on medium heat to cook chicken breast. If you have a grill at your disposal to cook your chicken, it will give the chicken a better flavor. If not, sauté your chicken in a skillet over medium heat with a little oil, turning it until it's cooked through. Set chicken aside to rest.
3. In a large pan, heat oil over medium heat. Add garlic and sauté for a few seconds, then add onions, peppers, and jalapeños. Sauté, stirring occasionally, until vegetables are tender. In the meantime, once the chicken has cooled, finely dice it.
4. Once the vegetables are tender, add chicken, beans, corn, green chiles and taco seasoning. Stir well. Add spinach, incorporating well.
5. Once well mixed and evenly distributed, turn off heat and add cheese a little at a time. It will melt quickly and get thick, but the cheese will help hold it all together.
6. Lay out a tortilla. In the center of the tortilla add ¼-½ cup of the mixture. Fold in sides, then roll egg rolls up, secure with a toothpick. Set aside on a sheet pan. Repeat. Once all the egg rolls are rolled, freeze on a sheet pan, then transfer to gallon-size freezer bags. They need to be frozen overnight or until solid before being fried.
7. When you're ready to cook the egg rolls, heat oil in a large pot over medium low heat. It's important that you don't get the oil too hot or the outside of the tortillas will be overcooked, and the inside will still be frozen. Slowly add 2-3 egg rolls to the heated oil. You need to keep rotating the egg rolls to cook evenly. They will need to fry for 10-12 minutes. To make sure the egg roll is cooked through to the center and not frozen in the middle, poke a toothpick into the fried tortilla, and if it goes through easily, it's done. If it has resistance in the center, cook it a little longer.
8. Let cool. Slice the egg rolls lengthwise at a diagonal. Serve with sour cream or guacamole.