LAS POSADAS · DECEMBER 16 TO 24

Ponche navideño for Las Posadas

Prep 20 min **Cook** 45 min **Total** 1 hr 5 min **Makes** About 12 mugs **Level** Easy

ADULT SUPERVISION REQUIRED

Cooking is for children and grown-ups together. An adult should supervise at all times and handle the oven, stovetop, knives, and anything hot. Hot punch and the fruit in it can scald. A grown-up does the stovetop work and the ladling, and mugs should cool before children drink. Cut fruit small for young children, remove every tejocote seed, and skip the sugarcane for children under 5: it is chewed for its juice, and the fibers are spit out, not swallowed.

ALLERGY INFORMATION

Made without the major food allergens. Check the labels on jarred or frozen fruit, and ask about fruit allergies before serving. Always read ingredient labels, since brands vary, and ask about food allergies before you cook or share.

INGREDIENTS

- 12 cups (3 liters) water
- 8 oz (225 g) piloncillo, or 1 cup (200 g) packed dark brown sugar
- 2 cinnamon sticks
- 8 tejocotes, fresh, frozen, or jarred (or 1 extra apple)
- 1 piece sugarcane, about 8 inches (20 cm), peeled and cut into thin sticks (optional)
- 6 prunes, pitted and halved
- ½ cup (75 g) raisins
- 2 apples, cored and diced
- 1 pear, cored and diced
- 6 guavas, fresh or frozen, quartered
- ¼ cup (about 10 g) dried hibiscus flowers (flor de jamaica), optional

METHOD

1. Put the water, piloncillo, and cinnamon sticks in a large pot and bring to a boil, stirring now and then until the piloncillo dissolves.
2. If using fresh or frozen tejocotes, simmer them in the pot for 10 minutes, then lift them out, let them cool, and cut them in half to remove the hard seeds. Return them to the pot. (Jarred tejocotes just need halving and seeding.)
3. Add the sugarcane, prunes, raisins, apples, and pear. Lower the heat and simmer, uncovered, for 15 minutes.
4. Add the guavas and simmer 15 minutes more, until all the fruit is soft. If using hibiscus, tie it in a tea strainer or cheesecloth and steep it in the pot for the last 10 minutes, then remove it.
5. Remove the cinnamon sticks. Taste, and stir in a little more sugar if you like.
6. Ladle into mugs with some of each fruit, and let it cool before giving it to children. Serve with a spoon for the fruit.

LITTLE HELPERS CAN (WITH A GROWN-UP)

- Wash the fruit and count the guavas
- Drop the cinnamon sticks into the cold water
- Set out mugs and spoons
- Sing the posada song at the door before coming in

GOOD TO KNOW

- Tejocotes are a small Mexican hawthorn fruit, sold fresh, frozen, or in jars in Mexican markets. Frozen guavas are often in the same freezer case.
- Ponche keeps in the fridge for 3 days. Rewarm it gently and add a splash of water if it has thickened.

A BLESSING BEFORE WE EAT

Bless us, O Lord, and these thy gifts, which we are about to receive from thy bounty, through Christ our Lord. Amen. Holy Mary and Saint Joseph, pray for us, and help us make room for Jesus and for everyone who needs a welcome.