

Cuscuz Paulista



Forget about Semolina, we are talking about cornflakes here. Not the breakfast cereal but the real cornflakes. You can find it in Latin markets all over the planet. In Portuguese it is “Farinha de Milho em Flocos” or in Spanish “Flocos de Mais.” It’s a traditional dish from the country regions of the southeast of Brazil and can be eaten cold or warm, in a vegan version, by using vegetable stock, or with chicken, fresh fish, canned sardines, or fresh shrimp. You actually can make the basis with the taste of your choice. Here I’ve chosen the Prawn version because I love the taste, but be my guest to change it.

Basic Stock

2 medium onions
1 garlic glove
5 tomatoes
2 Bay Leaves
1 medium red chili pepper with seed
3 lt water
3 table spoon salt
1 table spoon sugar
1 table spoon olive oil
1 table spoon dendê oil
All the “naked” corn cobs or the water from the can

If you want to make it with shrimp, add the heads and the shells at the beginning with the olive oil and the sugar. If you choose another version, take the sugar out of the stock.

After caramelizing for 1 or 2 minutes, add the onion the entire garlic glove, the dendê oil, the red pepper and the tomatoes, that’s the best sequence. Turn every 30sec until brown the garlic. Add the water and the bay leaves and let it cook for 45 minutes at least in high heat. Pass it through a strainer and reserve by keeping it hot. That 2 lt stock, is the soul of it.

Tomato Sauce

Direct in the Oven at 200°C for 1 hour every ingredient with the skin:

6 medium tomatoes
2 medium onions
3 garlic gloves
1 tablespoon sweet paprika
1 tablespoon curcuma powder
5 tablespoons olive oil
1 tablespoon salt

After cold, process it and reserve. I make it like the first step, until I cook the stock and prepare the cooking set.

The cooking set

3 medium onion
1 medium red pepper
1 medium green pepper
1 medium yellow pepper
(All really nice chopped with the same size)
8 Medium Prawns
3 shelled corn cobs (or standard 2 cans)
200g fresh petit pois (canned ones are not allowed)
500g Dry Latin Cornflakes
10 tablespoons of dendê oil
3 tablespoons tomato paste
Pinch of Salt and some chopped Parsley to the end
15g butter

Décor

In a mold put at the bottom, like a cake that you will turn upside down. Corn grains, 4 prawns, some petit pois, and some raw pepper strips for the color, or what your imagination can lead you to.

Heat 5 liters pan and add the peppers and the dendê oil, let it cook for 3 minutes, at high temperature. Salt it. Add the onions, don’t add more salt until the end. Turn the heat down, and after one minute add the tomato paste, turn it making a new paste, and then add the Prawns and a little bit of butter. Cook for 1 minute on each side, take the prawns out, and reserve them.

Back to the pan, add the corn, and all the stock, it's really a simple dish if you let it be. Add the tomato sauce that you made and let it cook for 15 minutes to assemble the flavors.

Now the petit pois and the Cornflakes, like in three parts, will control the softness. Add the first part of the cornflakes and turn it hard, like polenta for 30 sec, then the second part, and after more 30 sec turning the mixture, you can add the third one, at this point, it's actually ready, but cooking it for one more minute will make the flavor better. Put just 4 chopped prawns back in the mixture, the other 4 you are already using on the mold decoration. Turn the mix into the mold tap a little and leave it cold for 30 minutes, then you can de-mold it, and it's ready to cut the slices and eat like a queen or a king. You can prepare small versions too by using small modes and decorating at your taste and imagination. That’s a starter for dreaming about.