

Tobago Chile Marshmallows

By Lou Bank

4 ounces distilled water

4 ounces agave nectar

6 of the cutest Tobago chiles you can find at the Leaning Shed booth

3 envelopes plain powdered gelatin (3 tablespoons)

Unsalted butter for pan

2 cups pure cane sugar (I like caster or superfine sugar. Good texture.)

¼ teaspoon finely ground sea salt

½ cup powdered sugar

1 tablespoon ground Tobago chile

1. Blowtorch the skins off the Tobago chiles. Cut in half, and remove stem and seeds. (Save the seeds. Throw them in that jar of chile flakes you toss on pizza. Give ya a big surprise next Friday night.)
2. Bring the distilled water and agave nectar to a boil. Remove from heat, add the Tobagos, and cover. Let steep for three or four hours.
3. Run the Tobago syrup through a strainer. Save 6 ounces of the syrup for the marshmallows.
4. Take the Tobago chiles out of the strainer, and put them in your dehydrator. Set to 135, and leave until they're crunchy (about a day). (Don't have a dehydrator? Get one! If that's not in the cards ... go out and buy some ground Ancho chile.)
5. Bloom gelatin in 5 ounces cold water in the bowl of a stand mixer. While the gelatin softens, mix the powdered sugar with the ground Tobago (or Ancho, if you don't have a dehydrator). Then prepare a 9-by-13-inch glass baking pan by greasing it with butter inside and sprinkling it with enough of the powdered sugar mix to cover base and sides. Rotate pan so sugar is evenly applied. Set aside.
6. Combine 4 ounces warm water, sugar, salt, and Tobago syrup in a large, deep saucepan over medium-high heat, and bring to soft-ball stage, 238° F on a candy thermometer. Mixture will foam and turn caramel colored.
7. Place bowl with bloomed gelatin into a stand electric mixer fitted with the whisk attachment. Turn mixer to MEDIUM-LOW and slowly pour in hot sugar mixture, whisking into bloomed gelatin until it starts to fluff. Do not whip too fast or the hot syrup will splatter. Stop mixer and scrape sides. Restart mixer on MEDIUM-HIGH and whip until mixture becomes white and fluffy, about 10 minutes.
8. Scrape mixture into powdered sugar-lined pan and spread evenly to desired thickness (about 1 inch). Sprinkle top with powdered sugar

mixture and set aside. When cooled and set (from 30 minutes to 3 hours depending on humidity), turn slab out onto a cookie sheet covered with half of the remaining powdered sugar mixture. Slice into cubes with sharp knife or scissors dipped in warm water between each slice. Roll cubes in remaining powdered sugar mixture so all sides are coated. Let air-dry until not sticky (time varies according to humidity), and place in an air-tight covered container.

Great in hot chocolate! Great dipped in chocolate!