

# Llapingachos con Salsa de Mani

*Makes about 15 llapingachos*

*A popular spice in Latin America, annatto or achiote is a hard, rusty red seed that lends a distinctive color and smoky flavor to foods. Most Latin American grocery stores carry it in whole, ground or paste form. While not familiar to most Americans, annatto is used to add color to pantry staples such as butter and cheese.*

## **For the llapingachos:**

2 lbs Russet potatoes, peeled and cut into 1-inch pieces  
2 tablespoons vegetable oil, plus more for cooking  
1/2 medium white onion, finely chopped  
4 ounces Monterey Jack cheese, coarsely grated  
1 teaspoon ground “annatto” achiote  
Salt, to taste  
Freshly ground pepper, to taste

## **For the salsa de Mani:**

2 tablespoons vegetable oil  
1/2 small white onion  
1 teaspoon ground “annatto” achiote  
1/2 teaspoon ground cumin  
1 garlic clove, minced  
1/2 cup natural peanut butter  
3/4 cup whole milk  
Salt, to taste

## **For the Curtido de Cebolla y Tomate:**

1 small red onion, thinly sliced  
Kosher salt  
2 Roma tomatoes, seeded and thinly sliced  
1 1/2 tablespoons minced cilantro  
1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil  
Juice from 1 lime, or more to taste

## **For serving:**

Chopped Iceberg Lettuce

Place the potatoes in a medium saucepan and cover with cold, well-salted water. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat and cook for 18 to 20 minutes or until the potatoes are soft and easily pierced with a fork.

While the potatoes cook, heat the vegetable oil in a small skillet over medium heat. Add the chopped white onion and ground achiote and cook, stirring frequently, until soft (about 5 minutes). Set aside.

**This recipe came from *Minced* blog ([www.mincedblog.com](http://www.mincedblog.com)).**

Drain the cooked potatoes and place them in a large bowl. Mash the potatoes with a potato masher until smooth then stir in the seasoned onions. Taste the mixture and season to taste with salt and freshly ground black pepper.

Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Shape the potatoes into equal-sized balls (just bigger than a golf ball - you should get about 15) and place them on the parchment-lined baking sheet. Use your thumb to create a space in the middle of each ball and fill it with about 1/2 tablespoon of grated cheese. Gently shape the ball into a patty covering the cheese with the potato mixture as you shape it. Set aside or refrigerate until ready to cook.

To make the salsa de mani, heat two tablespoons of vegetable oil in a small saucepan over medium-high heat. Add the onion, achiote, and cumin and cook, stirring often, until the onion has softened. Stir in the garlic and cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Whisk in the peanut butter and milk and bring to a simmer. Season to taste. Remove from the heat and cover until ready to use.

To prepare the curtido, sprinkle the kosher salt over the red onion slices in a small bowl and rub the salt into the onions with your hands. Let sit for at least 10 minutes. Rinse the onions with cold water and allow them to drain in a fine mesh-strainer. Combine the drained onions, sliced tomato, cilantro, olive oil and lime in a medium bowl and toss to combine. Adjust the seasonings as needed and refrigerate until ready to serve.

Preheat the oven to 250 degrees. To cook the llapingachos, heat a heavy-bottomed skillet or griddle over medium heat. Add just enough oil to lightly coat the skillet or griddle using a brush to distribute it evenly if needed. Lightly brush both sides of the llapingachos with oil to prevent sticking.

Cook the llapingachos in batches for about 3 minutes on each side or until golden brown and the cheese inside has melted. Keep warm in the preheated oven while you prepare the remainder.

While the llapingachos cook, reheat the salsa de mani over low heat. If too thick, add a little more water. To serve, place the llapingachos on a bed of chopped iceberg lettuce and garnish with salsa de mani and curtido de cebolla y tomate.

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