

Diet

The Roma diet is dependent on the foods available to them during their migrations out of India to the Balkans and into Eastern, Central, and Western Europe. Staple foods that were picked up along the way include bread, mushrooms, nuts, red meat, snails, and potatoes. When they settled in a country they added the foods from that area to their diet. Gitanos in Spain eat a lot of tortillas, rice, and seafood, and enjoy midday snacks consisting of small portions of healthy ingredients, called tapas. Like their ancestors, Gitanos enjoy cooking outside in cauldrons over a wooden flame.

Healthy recipe

Mushroom/tortilla tapas (serves 10-12)

Ingredients

10 large flour tortillas, cut into quarters
1 pound portabella mushrooms, washed and chopped
1 pound traditional white mushrooms, washed and chopped
1 tsp. olive oil
10 pearl onions, peeled and sliced into rings
1 ½ cup shredded mozzarella cheese
1 tbsp. ground sage
Salt/pepper to taste

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 425 degrees.
2. Prick each of the tortilla quarters with a fork several times (this is to avoid curling when heated). Place all quarters on cookie sheets and bake for 10 minutes, checking to make sure the bottoms do not burn.
3. Remove tortilla quarters and cool. They will now be solid enough to add ingredients. Turn oven heat down to 300 degrees.
4. In a frying pan, heat the mushrooms in the small amount of oil. Sautee until done and most moisture is evaporated off.
5. Place the mushrooms on paper towels to soak up any leftover moisture.
6. On each tortilla quarter, top with a small amount of the mushroom mixture (about 1 tbsp.), 3-4 small onion rings, 1 tsp. or 2 full of shredded cheese, a sprinkling of sage, and salt and pepper, if desired.
7. Place all tortilla quarters back on the cookie sheets and return to oven. Cook until cheese has melted (usually not more than 5 minutes).
8. Serve with grilled artichokes and lean minute steaks.