

The

RANCHO GORDO

NEW WORLD THANKSGIVING

Guide



If you stop to think about it, Thanksgiving is one of the nicest holidays we have. It's a day dedicated to good food, friends and family, being thankful for what we have and for a moment, acknowledging the indigenous cultures that were here before the waves of immigrants arrived. In school we learned that the pilgrims and the Indians all had a wonderful feast and learned to become friends over turkey and cornbread. I suspect things weren't so easy but it's a great goal. Too often our Thanksgiving hosts are obsessed with recreating a meal "just like Mom's" and that's all well and good but it can be a little boring. We offer you some great recipes to make your Thanksgiving a little more American, a little less traditional and we think, a lot more delicious. We're hoping this little guide will help you with your holiday, whether you're a guest at a potluck or a host in charge of the whole show. You might pick up a trick or two or you might plan the entire meal around our suggestions. We just hope you have a great day and we'd be flattered if New World food was a part of your celebration.

APPETIZERS

YELLOW INDIAN WOMAN FRITTERS

Serves 10 to 12 for appetizers (about 30 fritters)

These were created for us by Angela Tamura, formerly of Napa's Zuzu Restaurant. Let's be honest, from vegan to meat eater, everybody likes a little something fried. I think this is a terrific way to kick off a memorable meal.

½ pound dried Yellow Indian Woman beans, sorted and rinsed
¼ white onion, diced
2 cloves garlic, minced
2 tablespoons olive oil
¼ cup whole milk
¼ of a small red onion
1 cup yellow cornmeal
1/3 cup all purpose flour
1 tablespoon sugar
½ cup buttermilk
1 medium egg, beaten
2 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro
Zest of 1 lime
1 ½ teaspoons coarse salt
½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
¾ to 1 cup vegetable oil for frying
Salsa and sour cream for serving

Sauté the onion and garlic in the olive oil in the bottom of a stockpot. When soft, add the beans. Cover beans with two inches of water. Bring the beans to a strong boil for 15 minutes and then lower to a gentle simmer. Cook the beans until tender, anywhere from 1 to 3 hours. If the water is running low, add warm water from a teakettle, as desired. In a food processor, puree 1½ cups of the cooked beans, along with the milk and red onion, until you have a smooth paste.

In a large bowl, with a potato masher, smash the remaining ½ cup of

beans until chunky-smooth. Add the cornmeal, flour, sugar, buttermilk, egg, cilantro, lime zest, and salt and pepper. Mix well with a rubber spatula.

The texture should be like that of oatmeal. Increase the cornmeal or milk as needed. Preheat the oven to 225F. Line a baking sheet with paper towels.

Pour the oil into a 10-inch cast iron skillet until it comes about 1/3 of an inch up the sides of the skillet. Turn the heat to high and heat the oil until it is very hot and shimmering, but not smoking. Spoon a scant teaspoon of bean batter into the oil to test it. The batter should hold its shape and sizzle in a lively fashion, but not smoke.

When the oil is ready, drop the bean batter by scant tablespoons into the oil, being careful not to crowd them. Cook for about 1 minute until they are set and browned on the bottom and then carefully turn them with tongs or a metal spatula and cook the other side for 1 minute longer. The fritters should be set and become a dark, caramel brown. Cook in batches of about 6 fritters, removing cooked fritters to the paper-towel-lined baking sheet and placing them in the oven while you continue with the remaining batter. Adjust heat as needed and add more oil if it gets low. Be sure to give it time to come up to temperature before cooking more fritters.

Serve as hors d'oeuvres with sour cream and salsa or a plated first course over greens with the same garnish.

The Rancho Gordo New World Thanksgiving Guide. Please visit www.ranchogordo.com for more information and ideas.

APPETIZERS

WILD RICE AND BEAN CANAPÉS

Makes about 20 bite-sized canapés

So many dishes seem to come from using up leftovers. One summer, a bumper crop of tomatoes, some leftover pureed beans, and cooked wild rice all came together to make these canapés. The creaminess of the beans really allows you to get a feel for the great texture of wild rice when it's fully cooked.

¾ cup cooked and drained Rancho Gordo heirloom beans
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
¼ cup finely chopped white or yellow onion
2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
3 tablespoons finely chopped flat leaf parsley
Simple Vinaigrette (recipe below)
¼ cup cooked Rancho Gordo wild rice
2 small Roma tomatoes
Salt and freshly ground pepper
20 small crackers or crostini

In a small saucepan over medium heat, warm the oil. Sauté the onion and garlic until soft and fragrant. Cool slightly and transfer to the bowl of a food processor. Add the parsley and beans. Process until smooth and season to taste with salt and pepper.

Toss the wild rice in one-half of the dressing and season with salt and pepper.

Finely dice the tomatoes and toss them in the remaining dressing, and season with salt and pepper.

To assemble the crostini, spread a small amount of the bean puree on each cracker or crostini. Spoon a little wild rice on top. Spoon some of the tomatoes over and serve immediately.

Simple Vinaigrette:

1 tablespoon lemon juice
1 tablespoon red wine vinegar
1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
1 garlic clove, finely chopped
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
Salt and freshly ground pepper

Whisk ingredients together and correct seasonings.

APPETIZERS

CRIMSON POPPING CORN WITH MEXICAN OREGANO

Serves 6 as an appetizer

What's more American than popcorn? Our manager here at Rancho Gordo, Julia Newberry, likes to add our Mexican Oregano for a new twist on an old favorite.

3 tablespoons canola or peanut oil
½ cup Rancho Gordo Crimson popping corn
2– 3 tablespoons butter
2 teaspoons Rancho Gordo Mexican oregano, crushed with your hand
Salt to taste
Finely grated Parmesan cheese (optional)

Have ready a large serving bowl. In a large, heavy-bottomed pot, heat the oil over medium-high heat. When hot, add the popcorn and cover the pot. Cook, shaking the pan frequently, until the popping has slowed down to 1 or 2 pops per second. This should take about 3 minutes. Carefully uncover the pot and transfer the popped corn to the serving bowl. (If you have a popcorn popper, use that instead!)

In a small saucepan, warm the butter over low heat. Add the crushed oregano to the pan and swirl to incorporate. Drizzle the herb butter over the popcorn and mix gently with your hands. Add salt to taste, and finish with grated Parmesan cheese, if you like.

SALADS

GREEN SALAD WITH POPPED AMARANTH

Serves 4 to 6

When I was younger, I loved salads that included everything but the kitchen sink. My inner hippie longed to keep adding sprouts, sunflower seeds, brewer's yeast, and who knows what else. Trips to Italy and enjoying their shockingly simple green salads, with interesting greens and insanely good olive oils, made me change my tune. I still understand the appeal of an "everything" salad, especially those weeknights when I'm home alone and catching up on Judge Judy. But for Thanksgiving (and a typical meal in Italy), the salad should be a sharp refresher course. I like my salads with some bitterness and sourness. It helps break up the rich food of the holiday.

The interesting part of this simple salad is the popped amaranth. Pop the seeds a spoonful at a time in a very hot, dry pan, shaking constantly so you don't burn them.

¼ cup Stivalet Banana Vinegar
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
¼ teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon pepper
Pinch of Rancho Gordo piloncillo or brown sugar
¾ cup extra-virgin olive oil
½ cup popped Rancho Gordo Amaranth seeds (see above)
Salad Greens

In a salad bowl, mix the vinegar, mustard, salt, pepper, piloncillo (or brown sugar) and olive oil until emulsified. Add the greens and popped amaranth and toss gently.

SALADS

CACTUS SALAD WITH TORTILLA STRIPS AND QUESO FRESCO

Serves 6 to 8

When planning this meal, my real goal was to replace green bean casserole. I know it's a favorite of many but I find it insipid. I much prefer cooked dried beans somewhere on the menu, obviously. I would much rather have this salad. The tart cactus paddles are delicious and the crunchy fried tortilla strips make it indulgent. This recipe comes from our own Cecilia Ortiz, who you can find working in our Napa store and on special projects like this.

1 pound cactus paddles, thorns removed and cleaned
1 tablespoon plus 1 ½ teaspoons salt
1 garlic clove, peeled
1 small piece of onion, plus 1 large onion, finely diced
2 tomatillo husks
2 medium tomatoes, finely diced
1 bunch of cilantro, finely diced
1 chile serrano, finely diced
½ teaspoon of Rancho Gordo Mexican oregano, crushed
2 teaspoons olive oil
1 tablespoon of Stivalet Banana Vinegar
¼ cup crumbled queso fresco
Avocado slices for garnish
Canola or peanut oil for frying
5 corn tortillas, sliced into thin strips

Cut the cactus into 1-inch strips.

In a saucepan, boil 5 cups of water with 1 tablespoon of salt. Once the water has started to boil, add the garlic clove, the small piece of onion, the tomatillo husks, and the cactus. Cook until the cactus is tender and dark green in color, about 15 minutes.

Once cooked, drain the cactus and discard the other ingredients. Set aside.

In a large bowl, combine the diced onion, tomatoes, cilantro, and chile serrano. Add the oregano, oil, banana vinegar, and 1½ teaspoons of salt. Rinse the drained cactus with cold water. Drain again and add to the bowl; mix well.

Cover and refrigerate for 1 hour.

Meanwhile, pour canola oil to a depth of about an inch into a skillet and heat over medium-high heat. Add the tortilla strips and fry, turning once, until golden and crisp, 2-3 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer the tortilla strips to paper towels to drain.

Serve the salad cold and add the crumbled queso fresco, tortilla strips, and avocado on top as a garnish.

SALADS

TOMATO AND CORN QUINOA SALAD

Serves 4

Rancho Gordo's Julia Newberry shared her mother's recipe for tabbouleh for our newsletter and it was such a hit, I asked Julia if she would adapt for the Thanksgiving table.

1 cup dried Rancho Gordo quinoa
2 cups water
5-6 green onions, minced
1 cup cooked corn kernels (or thawed frozen)
1 small cucumber, peeled and chopped
½ pint cherry tomatoes, halved
2 cups minced parsley
Juice of 2 lemons
¼ cup olive oil
¾ tsp salt
½ tsp freshly ground black pepper
1 tsp allspice (the secret ingredient)

Rinse the quinoa. Bring the water to a boil then add the quinoa, cover, and simmer for 15 minutes or until done (not mushy).

Place the quinoa in a bowl and fluff with a fork. Let cool, then add the remaining ingredients and gently combine.

SIDE DISHES

HEIRLOOM BEANS WITH PANKO-HERB CRUST

Serves 4 to 6

The first year I made this, I replaced the mashed potatoes with this dish. The news brought some concern among my traditionalist friends but once we were eating, there wasn't one complaint! I like mashed potatoes (or butter with some potatoes, as it might be called) but I find this dish much more satisfying and much easier to make.

½ pound dried Rancho Gordo Royal Corona beans, sorted and rinsed
½ yellow onion, diced
2 cloves garlic, minced
3 tablespoons olive oil
¾ cup Panko bread crumbs
1 tablespoon butter, softened to room temperature
1 tablespoon Rancho Gordo Mexican oregano
¾ cup Monterey Jack cheese, grated

If you have time, soak the beans in clean, cold water, covering by about two inches.

Sauté the onion and garlic in two tablespoons of the olive oil in the bottom of a stockpot. When soft, add the beans. If you soaked, add the water as well. Make sure the beans are covered by an inch or two of water. Bring the beans to a boil for 15 minutes and then lower to a gentle simmer. Cook the beans, anywhere from 1 to 3 hours. If the water is running low, add warm water from a teakettle, as desired.

Preheat oven to 375F. In a medium bowl, add the Panko, the butter, the remaining tablespoon of olive oil, the Mexican oregano and the cheese. Toss well.

Drain the beans (reserving the liquid for another dish) and add to an oven safe casserole. Evenly top with the bread crumb mix. Bake for 30-

SIDE DISHES

45 minutes. The sides should be bubbling and the bread crumbs should form a crust.

Variations: You could easily add leftover bits of meat, bacon or even vegetables, but this dish is delicious without them and there presumably will be a lot of heavy food this day. You can easily increase the amount of beans and make enough for a crowd.

FARMERS MARKET STUFFING WITH WILD RICE

Makes about 6 cups

I developed this stuffing mix back when I was selling beans at the Marin County Farmers Market in San Rafael, in the parking lot of the wonderful Frank Lloyd Wright building that houses all the county offices. The original ingredients were from all the vendors on my row that I liked and had good product. Not everyone made the cut!

I've replaced the organic ground beef with bison. All of my local grocery stores seem to have it now. If yours doesn't, replace it with ground beef. I love wild rice but I don't like how we tend to only eat it around the holidays. I vow to keep a bag handy and make it more often.

3 cups chicken broth

1½ cups dried Rancho Gordo wild rice (about 9 ounces), rinsed, drained

1 cup water

2 teaspoons Rancho Gordo Mexican oregano

1 pound ground bison

3 medium Poblano chiles or green bell peppers, roasted, cleaned and skinned

2 medium red (Bermuda) onions, chopped (about 2 cups)

1 cup pecans, chopped and lightly toasted

Combine broth, rice, 1 cup water and Mexican oregano in a large saucepan over high heat. Bring to boil, then reduce to a soft simmer until the wild rice is tender, stirring occasionally, about 55 minutes. Drain.

Sauté bison meat in heavy large skillet over medium-high heat until cooked through, breaking up with a wooden spoon, about 10 minutes.

Using slotted spoon, transfer the ground meat to paper towels and drain. Add chopped chiles or peppers and onions to drippings in skillet. Sauté over medium heat until vegetables are soft, about 10-15 minutes. Add the cooked wild rice and meat to the skillet. Sauté until heated through. Stir in the pecans. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

(The stuffing can be prepared a day ahead. Cover and refrigerate once cool. Reheat in a covered baking dish for 20 minutes in a 350F oven.) Transfer to bowl and serve. If using as stuffing, cool completely and fill bird

SIDE DISHES

WILD RICE AND CORN “SOUFFLÉ”

This is a hearty side dish that will have everyone curious and my bet is that it will have everyone going back for seconds. Norah Collins Cline worked in our San Francisco store and she is constantly coming up with great recipes that inspire both customers and staff. I am thankful to have her around.

1 cup dried Rancho Gordo wild rice
1 tablespoon olive oil
1 leek, white and light green parts, rinsed well and thinly sliced
2 cloves garlic, minced
2½ cups cooked corn kernels (or thawed frozen) (you can also try substituting cooked posole for ½ –1 cup of the corn)
1 poblano, pasilla, or jalapeño pepper (depending on your heat preference)
1 tablespoon butter
1 tablespoon flour
1 cup milk
3 regular or 2 extra large egg whites, whipped until just stiff
¼ cup grated sharp cheddar
1 tablespoon fresh chopped herbs of choice such as rosemary, sage and thyme
Salt and pepper to taste

Rinse the wild rice, then add it to a pot with 3 cups lightly salted water. Bring to a boil over high heat and boil rapidly for 5 minutes, then reduce the heat to very low, cover, and cook for 50 minutes. Most of the liquid should be absorbed and the rice should be tender. Drain any excess water and let the rice cool to room temperature.

In a sauté pan, warm the oil over medium-low heat. Add the leek and sauté until fragrant, about 3 minutes. Stir in the garlic and cook for a few more minutes. Let cool to room temperature.

Heat a comal or dry skillet (preferably cast iron) over high heat. Add the chile pepper and dry roast, turning often, until the skin is blistered. Place

the chile in a bowl, cover with a plate, and let steam for about 15 minutes. Scrape off the charred skins, then remove the stem and seeds, and chop the flesh. Reserve ¼ cup chopped chile for this recipe.

To make the béchamel, in a small saucepan, melt the butter over low heat. Add the flour and stir until smooth. Cook over medium heat until the mixture turns golden, 6–7 minutes. Meanwhile, heat the milk in a separate pan until just about to boil. Add the hot milk to the butter mixture a little at a time, whisking continuously until very smooth. Bring to a boil. Cook 10 minutes, stirring constantly, then remove from heat and let cool.

Butter a casserole or soufflé dish and preheat the oven to 350F. (Individual dishes can also be used, just lower the oven temperature by 25 degrees.)

In a bowl, combine the cooked wild rice and corn (and hominy if using). Fold in the béchamel, fresh herbs, chile, and cheese (reserving ¼ of the cheese to top the dish). Add salt and pepper to taste. Gently fold in the egg whites, about a third of them at a time. Carefully fill the cooking vessel(s) and cover the top with the reserved cheese.

Bake for 35–45 minutes (or 20–25 minutes for individual servings); when the tip of a knife is inserted in the center, there should be no visible liquid. Notes: The use of a bain-marie is a bonus but not necessary. The use of one will help keep the mixture more moist. Either way, it's good! Also, if the top starts to take on too much color in the oven, gently tent with foil. Remember this is not a classic soufflé so don't be intimidated or worry about it collapsing.

FOODS THE AMERICAS GAVE THE WORLD

**AGAVE
CACAO
SARSAPARILLA
SASSAFRAS
CORN
QUINOA
SQUASH
SUNFLOWER
WILD RICE
AVOCADO
GOOSEBERRY
BLACKBERRY
SAPOTE
BLUEBERRY
CACTI (NOPALES AND TUNAS)
CASHEW
CRANBERRY
ELDERBERRY
GRAPES (PARTICULAR SPECIES
ARE NATIVE TO N. AMERICA)
POTATOES
GUAVA**

**MAMEY
PAPAYA
PERSIMMON
PINEAPPLE
RASPBERRY
STRAWBERRY (PARTICULAR
STRAINS
FOUND IN CHILE AND
COLOMBIA)
ACHIOTE
BEANS
CHILES
CHAYOTE
TOMATILLOS
LAMBS QUARTERS
TOMATO
MUSHROOMS (NOT EXCLUSIVE
TO THE AMERICAS)
PEANUT
PURSLANE**

VEGETARIAN MAIN COURSE

WILD RICE AND HEIRLOOM BEAN SALAD

My pal Alexis Handelman, the creative brains behind our beloved Alexis Baking Company here in Napa, had me over this last summer for a meal. It was all delicious but she made a composed salad with heirloom beans that just knocked my socks off. I asked her if we could have the recipe for Thanksgiving and she said no! She wanted to readjust it for the seasonal vegetables that would make it even better. If this meant another dinner party, I was all in! The Thanksgiving version turned out to be even more memorable. As I ate seconds (and thirds), I thought, this dish is great because it's delicious, its focus is seasonal New World food and it was substantial enough that my vegetarian friends would feel plenty of love. So often they are an afterthought and Thanksgiving should really be about making everyone happy. Don't let the ingredient list or techniques scare you off. It's elaborate but easy. Mostly you are preparing the different parts and then gently composing the finished dish on a platter. Watching Alexis' face as she entered the dining room with this big beautiful dish, bursting with well-deserved pride, really made me think this is going to be a terrific holiday season.

Salad:

4 cups cooked Rancho Gordo Rebozero or Eye of the Goat beans
4 cups cooked Rancho Gordo Wild Rice
1 cup cubed Sugar Pie pumpkin squash
½ red onion
Extra virgin olive oil
Salt and pepper
5 large Brussels sprouts
1 cup dried cranberries, rehydrated in water or

brandy

1 fresh Fuyu persimmon, quartered and thinly sliced

1/3 cup baby arugula (rocket)

1/3 cup flat-leaf parsley leaves

Vinaigrette:

¾ cup extra virgin olive oil

2 tablespoons red wine vinegar

2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar

1–2 teaspoons grainy mustard

2 tablespoons minced fresh herbs such as lemon thyme, chervil, or marjoram

Salt and pepper

Garnish:

¼ cup plus 2 tablespoons pomegranate seeds

1 cup toasted walnuts or pecans, chopped

Preheat the oven to 400F. Toss the squash cubes and onion with a liberal amount of olive oil and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Transfer to a baking sheet and roast until tender, turning if necessary, 15 to 20 minutes. Once the onion is cool enough to handle, cut it into ½-inch dice. Meanwhile, separate the leaves from the Brussels sprouts, discarding the tough cores. In a steamer, steam the leaves until bright green and just tender, about 3 minutes.

To make the vinaigrette, whisk the olive oil, red wine vinegar, balsamic vinegar, mustard, and herbs together in a bowl. Add salt and pepper to taste.

In a bowl, combine the beans, wild rice, and diced onion. Mix in about half of the vinaigrette. Taste and adjust the seasoning with salt and pepper or more vinaigrette. Transfer to a large platter.

In another bowl, combine the roasted squash, Brussels sprouts,

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THE TURKEY

cranberries, persimmon, arugula, and parsley. Add about ¼ cup of the remaining vinaigrette and mix gently to combine. Taste and adjust the seasoning with salt and pepper or more vinaigrette. Scatter this mixture on top of the bean-rice mixture.

Sprinkle the pomegranates and walnuts over the top of the salad and drizzle with the remaining vinaigrette.

Notes on cooking this dish:

I'm not a huge persimmon fan but I'll eat them. I took my first bite of this salad and rather rudely said, "It's really good but I think I'd add more vinegar and up the acid level a bit." Alexis nodded and then I took another bite, this time with the persimmon. Never mind. This was perfection! My advice would be to make sure there's enough persimmon so you get a little bit with most bites.

To keep things sharp and distinct, as well as beautiful, Alexis dressed the different components and then lovingly composed her platter. My tendency would be to put all the ingredients in a bowl and then just toss but Alexis proved me wrong. This a fairly accurate account of what she made but she said the most important thing is to have fun. I'm confident your guests, all of them, will love this.

TURKEY MARINADE

Turkey is a very personal thing and I wouldn't advise you how to cook yours beyond telling you that my most memorable turkey was marinated and spatchcocked (or sometimes called butterflied). You cut out the back and smash the bird down on a baking pan and roast. It's fast. Check the internet for different suggestions about time and temperature. The fact that the bird is flat makes it cook evenly and I really have never heard such raves before. This marinade also helps.

1 cup olive oil

½ cup soy sauce

½ cup Stivalet Banana Vinegar

½ cup minced fresh sage

2 tablespoons Rancho Gordo Mexican oregano or oregano Indio

½ cup chopped fresh parsley

¼ cup minced fresh thyme

4 cloves garlic, minced

1 tablespoon Rancho Gordo New Mexican chile powder

Mix all ingredients together with a whisk, food processor or blender. Allow your turkey to marinate for at least 4 hours, 24 is best, rotating every 4 to 6 hours.

DESSERTS

CARAMELIZED PINEAPPLE WITH VANILLA

Serves 4

I have an obscene love of pineapples in any form. I just can't stop eating them and this recipe, developed by Julia Newberry, brings out all the good flavor by pushing the vanilla.

2 tablespoons unsalted butter

¼ cup Rancho Gordo piloncillo

1 teaspoon Rancho Gordo vanilla

½ pineapple, peeled, cored, and cut into half-moons

Vanilla ice cream for serving

In a large skillet over medium heat, melt the butter. Add the piloncillo and vanilla and cook, stirring to incorporate, about 1 minute. Add the pineapple and cook, swirling the pan and turning the pineapple pieces once, until the pineapple is tender and coated with sauce, about 4 minutes per side.

Serve the caramelized pineapple with ice cream and drizzle with any sauce remaining in the pan.

CHOCOLATE MOUSSE WITH STRAWBERRIES

Serves 4

One day my friend Connie Green of Wine Forest came over with little ramekins of chocolate mousse, made with our stoneground chocolate. I was very surprised as I think of Mexican chocolate as a hot, frothy drink or a key ingredient in mole. I just hadn't considered other possibilities, but boy, was I wrong. Julia Newberry took Connie's idea and perfected it.

6 ounces Rancho Gordo stoneground chocolate, about 1¾ tablets, broken into chunks

3 tablespoons brewed coffee or water

1 tablespoon salted butter (optional)

½ teaspoon Rancho Gordo vanilla (optional)

3 very fresh eggs, separated

1 pint strawberries consistency, adding the remaining 1 tablespoon coffee if needed. Remove

from the heat and stir in the butter and vanilla, if using.

While the chocolate is still hot enough to cook the egg yolks slightly, add the yolks, one at a time, while stirring constantly. Let the mixture cool for just a bit.

In a large bowl, using a handheld mixer, beat the egg whites until they hold a soft peak. Using a rubber spatula, gently fold the chocolate mixture into the egg whites just until combined. Cover and chill for at least 1 hour. Meanwhile, hull and slice the strawberries and place in a bowl. Add the sugar and stir to combine. Let stand at room temperature until the juices are released, at least 30 minutes. (The strawberries can be refrigerated, covered, for up to 1 day.)

Transfer the mousse to 4 ramekins or pretty cups for serving. Top with strawberries and whipped cream, if desired, and serve.

DRINKS

CHAMPURRADO DE CAFÉ

Serves 4 to 6

Half the fun of Thanksgiving day is hanging out with friends and family and waiting for the bird. If it's a cold day, hot drinks take the sting out of the frosty weather. A guest nursing a mug of this champurrado is in no hurry to go anywhere.

4 cups whole milk

3 tablespoons Rancho Gordo blue corn pinole

½ cup Rancho Gordo piloncillo or brown sugar

3 spoonfuls of instant coffee (or regular coffee)

2 teaspoons Rancho Gordo vanilla extract

Rancho Gordo canela for garnish (optional)

In a medium pot, combine the pinole and milk and stir well to combine. Add the piloncillo and the coffee. Cook over medium-low heat, stirring constantly, for 15 minutes or until thick; don't let it boil. Remove from the heat and add the vanilla. Serve hot. Grate a bit of canela over the top if desired

GIVING THANKS

I'm thankful that you've read this far!

Of course I'm also thankful for my family, my friends, my fellow employees here at Rancho Gordo, our customers (both wholesale and the consumers), our growers and producers, and I'm especially thankful that my problems are relatively small, especially in context of others with some real problems, often brought on simply by being born in the wrong place. On behalf of the staff and producers here at Rancho Gordo, I hope you have a great Thanksgiving Day.

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