Gabilan Calf Nuts

(or Rocky Mountain Oysters a la Coastal California Range)

Submitted by Don Baldocchi

Ingredients

- 1 pound calf nuts, approximately
- 1 yellow onion finely chopped
- 5-8 cloves garlic finely chopped
- ¼ c olive oil (or other cooking oil)
- Butter to sauté (approx. 1/8 c)
- ½ lemon (or more to taste)
- ½ bunch cilantro coarsely chopped
- 1 baguette sliced crossways
- Salt to taste

Breading (optional)

- ½ c flour
- Ground pepper to taste (1/2 tsp or more)
- Salt to taste (1/2 tsp)

Preparation & Serving

- Peeling: Generally, once harvested, the nuts are oval, covered in a tough outer membrane. The first step (and challenge) is to remove the membrane to reveal the organ meat inside. The technique requires a decently sharp knife and a cutting board. Holding a fold of the membrane against the board slice it to break through the skin. Continuing to hold the membrane and the blade against the board and use back and forth motions as you push the blade towards the nut. The skin will peel away as the nut, pushed by the blade, rolls out. Continue until the entire membrane is removed. This method of peeling takes some practice to develop. Stay with it and with patience, it will become second nature. You will end up with a bowl of soft textured nuts. The larger ones should be cut into half to three quarter inch pieces.

- Breading: If you decide to bread them, do so in a large steel bowl allowing you to toss them with flour and spices.

- Sauté: In a cast iron skillet sauté the onion with olive oil until just brown, set aside. In the same skillet, melt the butter and sauté the calf nuts until crispy. This generally takes only 7 to 10 minutes. Add back the onion with the minced garlic and continue the sauté for another 2-3 minutes. Salt if needed at this point. Remove from heat, squeeze the entire half lemon over the meat. Throw/sprinkle the fresh cilantro on top.

Serve immediately in the skillet as an hors d oeuvres with the sliced baguette.

A 30th Anniversary Recipe