



## LON'S AT THE HERMOSA

Lon Megargee's misty murals displayed in our state capitol are paeans to his adopted state of Arizona, but much of his artistry shines at the Hermosa Inn.

There are so many ways to experience Lon's at the Hermosa, still glowing with the southwest grandeur Lon created in the 1930s.

You can enjoy a sunset cocktail on the patio, surrounded by six fireplaces, the murmur of falling water, abundant blooms and rustic tableaux. You can nestle by a fireplace in one of the cozy dining rooms for a Sunday brunch, savoring house-smoked salmon, short rib hash, or the beloved monkey bread. You can reserve the private dining room in the wine cellar, hosting a truly memorable celebration with loved ones and choosing a bottle from the award-winning wine list of 700 selections. You can share house-bottled cocktails like the Desert Interlude or Palo Cristi Sour before feasting on tortilla soup, braised beef short ribs and goat cheese polenta.

Wherever you decide to dine, Lon's Cowboy Candy Bar, or Schnepf Farms peaches (in season) with almond streusel, are perfect finishes.

Then stroll the areas you didn't already enjoy; the brick paths to thick adobe-walled rooms like the library and main restaurant. See Lon's sketches and the no-less-artistic blue-bordered windows, creative fountains, spreading plants along hacienda patios. You will feel like a treasured guest of an artistic host . . . because you will be one.

## TORTILLA SOUP

This delicious soup is intended as a first course, but can easily be doubled and served as an entrée.

### INGREDIENTS

- 6 Roma tomatoes, halved
- 1 poblano chile pepper, halved
- 3 cloves fresh garlic
- 6-8 corn tortillas, matchstick or julienne cut
- 1-2 cups canola oil, for coating the vegetables and frying the tortillas
- 1 yellow onion, thinly sliced
- 1 dried ancho chile pepper, seeded and broken into small pieces
- 2 teaspoons cumin powder
- 1/4-1/2 teaspoon chipotle chile powder (optional, to taste)
- 32 ounces low-sodium chicken stock
- 1 bunch fresh cilantro leaves, chopped and divided (reserve half for garnish)
- 1-2 tablespoons kosher salt, to taste
- 2 teaspoons freshly ground pepper, to taste
- 1 lime, juiced
- 1 pound fresh grilled chicken, shredded or chopped
- 1-2 avocados, diced (don't cut in advance)





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## METHOD

Place an oven rack in the upper third of the oven. Line a baking sheet with aluminum foil. Place the tomatoes, poblano chile pepper and garlic on the baking sheet and rub with a small amount of canola oil.

Sprinkle with salt and freshly ground pepper. Place in the oven under the broiler until lightly charred, about 5-10 minutes. Transfer to a cutting board and allow to cool, then give the vegetables a rough chop.

Use a large stockpot and pour about 1/2-inch canola oil into the bottom of the pot, heating over medium-high heat. When the oil is hot and shimmering, fry the tortilla strips until light golden brown. Transfer the tortilla strips to a platter lined with paper towels. Sprinkle with a little kosher salt.

Drain off most of the excess oil, leaving about 2 tablespoons oil in the pot. Heat over medium heat, add the onions and sweat for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. The onions should be translucent.

Stir in the tomatoes, poblano pepper and garlic. Add the dried ancho chile, cumin powder and chipotle chile powder (if using), and sweat for 3 more minutes. This will give the spice's fragrant aromas time to bloom. Season with 1 teaspoon salt and 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground pepper.

Add 1/2 of the fried tortilla strips and half of the fresh cilantro. (Reserve the remaining tortilla strips and cilantro for the garnish.) Pour in the chicken stock and bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Once the soup comes to a boil, reduce the heat to medium-low and simmer for 25 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Remove stockpot from heat and allow soup to cool for 10 minutes. Use a blender or a hand-held immersion blender to purée the soup until smooth. If you prefer a velvety smooth soup, pour it through a fine mesh strainer, using the bottom of a ladle or a spatula to press as much liquid through as possible. At this point, the soup can be transferred into a container, covered and chilled overnight.

When ready to serve, reheat to a simmer over medium heat. Stir in the fresh lime juice and grilled chicken.

Adjust the seasonings, adding more salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste.

Dice the avocado.

Ladle this flavorful and fragrant soup into serving bowls. Add the diced avocado and reserved fried tortilla strips. Garnish with fresh cilantro leaves. Serve immediately. MAKES 6-8 HALF CUP SERVINGS

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