



NEWS RELEASE

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Release Number: 34-09
Date: April 23, 2009
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Cinco de Mayo means it's time for fajitas

*By Kay Blakley,
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FORT LEE, Va. – If you like Mexican food, then May 5, also known as Cinco de Mayo, provides the perfect opportunity to try your hand at preparing some traditional south-of-the-border delights. Sizzling fajitas are high on my list of favorites, and they're easy to prepare, especially when you start with a little bit of “up-front” information.

For example, have you ever cooked a flank steak? That's the beef cut of choice for the fajita recipe that follows. There was a time when flank steak went begging in the meat counter because most people had no clue what to do with it. That was before fiery Mexican cuisine captured the hearts, not to mention the taste buds, of the entire nation. Its popularity is partially responsible for flank steak's higher price tag today – supply and demand at work, you know.

If the flank steak's price puts it out of your reach, you can substitute skirt steak, which may be less expensive, or bottom round steak, which is cheaper still. However, flank steak and skirt steak both have a rich, full, beefy flavor that is perfect for fajitas – a quality bottom round just can't match.

Flank steak is very thin and cooks quickly, so be careful not to overcook. High heat for a short period of time is what you want. It is also a very fibrous cut of beef, so you will have no trouble telling how the grain runs. Slice it across the grain on the bias (diagonally). This is important. Slicing incorrectly will give you a stringy toughness that will ruin the dish.

Be sure to use fresh cilantro. Your commissary should have it – if not ask them to get it

for you. Finally, don't skip the lime juice in the marinade, and don't use the stuff from a plastic bottle. Go for the real thing. Squeezing a couple of fresh limes takes only a minute to do and makes a big difference in flavor.

Recipes for all the side dishes you'll want, like Spanish Rice, California Guacamole, Pico de Gallo, Layered Taco Bean Dip and more, are ready and waiting in Kay's Kitchen on the Web at <https://www.commissaries.com>. All the ingredients you need are available at your local commissary at savings of 30 percent or more. So, put on some salsa music, crank up the volume and let's get cooking!

Steak Fajitas (Serves 6)

Meat ingredients:

- 1 flank steak (about 1¼ pounds) cut across the grain on the bias into strips ¼-inch wide by about 3-inches long
- 2 medium onions sliced into ½-inch half moons
- 2 medium bell peppers, one red and one green, cored, seeded and cut into ½-inch strips or wedges

Marinade ingredients:

- ¼ cup fresh lime juice (about 2 limes)
- 2 green onions, minced
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 3 tablespoons minced fresh cilantro
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- ½ to 1 teaspoon red pepper flakes
- ¼ teaspoon ground coriander or cumin

12 7-inch flour tortillas, warmed

Instructions:

1. Place the steak strips in a zip closure plastic bag. Whisk together all marinade ingredients in a medium bowl; pour over the steak.
2. Close the bag, expressing out all the air; knead the bag several times to make sure all the meat is thoroughly coated.

3. Marinate in the refrigerator for 12 to 24 hours, kneading several times.
4. Heat two tablespoons oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat.
5. Add the sliced onions, cook and stir for 1½ minutes.
6. Add peppers to the skillet, cook and stir 1½ minutes more or till tender crisp.
7. Remove to a platter and keep warm.
8. Drain the marinade from the steak strips and quickly stir-fry, in two batches, adding more oil to the pan as needed, just till no longer pink.
9. Arrange steak strips on the platter with the onions and pepper strips.

Let each guest fill a warm tortilla with steak strips, vegetables, and their choice of pico de gallo, guacamole, sour cream, or all three. Roll up the tortilla over the fillings and enjoy! Serve with Spanish rice.

- DeCA-

About DeCA: *The Defense Commissary Agency operates a worldwide chain of commissaries providing groceries to military personnel, retirees and their families in a safe and secure shopping environment. Authorized patrons purchase items at cost plus a 5-percent surcharge, which covers the costs of building new commissaries and modernizing existing ones. Shoppers save an average of more than 30 percent on their purchases compared to commercial prices – savings worth about \$3,400 annually for a family of four. A core military family support element, and a valued part of military pay and benefits, commissaries contribute to family readiness, enhance the quality of life for America's military and their families, and help recruit and retain the best and brightest men and women to serve their country.*