

# The Dining Diva

## Texas Cowhide Dinner

### Culinary Countdown!

1 Month Before: Plan your decorations; this is the fun part! Denim to cover the table is great and inexpensive. Bandanas from the craft stores can be used for napkins. Cowboy boots—maybe a child's size is best— from the thrift store can hold a plastic cup with water and be the vase for flowers. There are lots of great ways to decorate according to the theme; you just need to look around.

Buy and mail invitations. This is going to be a mega-event! Certainly encourage your guests to come in Western attire!!

4 Days Before: Follow up on RSVPs; verify number of guests.

3 Days Before: Gather (and make ready) all table linens, dishes, flatware, glasses, serving utensils, and salt and pepper grinders; plan or order centerpiece; decide on all beverages. Maybe some C & W music?

2 Days Before: Edit grocery list; shop for all items EXCEPT shrimp; purchase wines, liqueurs, and spirits.

Set the table—completely. This can be a big job if your decorations are extensive. Call a friend to help!

Prepare Creole Dipping Sauce and refrigerate in a squeeze bottle.

Make the Quick and Easy Horseradish Sauce (if serving) and refrigerate.

Make the Chocolate Peanut Butter Pie (if serving). Store tightly covered in the refrigerator.

1 Day Before: Purchase shrimp and peel them for the Coconut Shrimp; refrigerate.

Prepare the salad and refrigerate.

Prepare Spicy Peppercorn Sauce and refrigerate in a microwaveable container.

Make, and bake, the Chipotle Corn Soufflé. Refrigerate uncovered until it is completely chilled, then cover. (You don't want to hold in heat or trap condensation.)

**Western Day:** Grab your hat; put on your boots! (Did you know that some cornstarch sprinkled on your feet and inside your boots makes them slip on with ease?)

This timing guide will be a bit different from the others. Timing is tricky if you have only one oven (but I wrote this for single-oven kitchens). Bear with me...

This is the plan for serving:

6:00: Guests arrive and have a cocktail

6:30: Coconut Shrimp is served

6:45: Cucumber, Tomato, and Onion salad is served

7:15: Beef with Sauce and Onions, Corn Soufflé, Green Veggie is served

8:00: Dessert and coffee is served

4:00 or earlier: Prepare and fry the Coconut Shrimp and Frizzled Onions. For each, drain and cool on cooling racks placed over paper towel-lined sheet pans. Refrigerate uncovered on the racks (you'll use these for reheating later) until they are completely chilled, then cover.

4:45: Remove beef from refrigerator and allow it to come to room temperature.

5:30: Preheat oven to 425°. Season and sear beef.

Place green veggie in steamer basket over saucepan with water, cover, and have ready to go on the stovetop.

Place the sauce for the beef in the microwave, ready to go.  
5:45: Put beef in oven to roast.  
Remove cooked shrimp, corn soufflé, and onions from refrigerator.  
6:20: Put shrimp in oven (with the beef) to heat for 5 minutes.  
6:30: Remove beef from oven. Tent the beef with foil and let rest.  
Reduce oven temperature to 350° for corn soufflé and onions.  
Serve shrimp with chilled sauce.  
6:45: Put corn soufflé in oven, covered to heat.  
Turn on stovetop to steam veggie.  
Plate and serve salad (from the refrigerator).  
7:00: Put onions in the oven to heat 5-8 minutes, together with the corn soufflé.  
Microwave the sauce for the beef. Remove onions and corn soufflé from the oven.  
Slice thick steaks from the rib roll.  
7:15: Brew coffee for dessert.  
Plate the beef and top with sauce and onions. Plate the corn soufflé and the green veggie.  
Serve with a smile and lots of style!!  
8:15: Serve dessert—either the S'mores or the Chocolate Peanut Butter Pie, and coffee.

***Yippee!!! You DID it!!!  
(now about those boots and aching feet...)***