



Crybabies: Sweet & Sassy Jalapenos boast the bite of jalapeno slices tempered with the sweetness of pineapple. A jar this size retails for about \$8.

No tears here

McGregor women's Crybabies jalapenos selling strong

JALAPENO RECIPES

EVERYTHING'S IN THERE CORN BREAD

- 1 pound spicy, ground pork sausage
- 1 medium onion, diced
- 1 cup white cornmeal
- 1/2 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 2 eggs, lightly beaten
- 1/2 cup vegetable oil
- 1 15-ounce can of black-eyed peas, drained
- 2 cups shredded cheddar cheese
- 1/2 cup creamed corn
- 1/3 cup Crybabies
- 1 4.5-ounce can chopped green chilies
- 1 cup buttermilk

Cook sausage and onion in a large skillet over medium heat about 5 minutes, stirring until sausage crumbles and is no longer pink. Drain.

Combine cornmeal, flour, salt and baking soda.

Stir together eggs, buttermilk and oil until combined.

Add to the dry ingredients, stirring until just moistened. (Batter will not be smooth.) Add sausage mixture, peas and remaining ingredients to the batter, stirring well.

Pour into a greased 13-by-9 inch baking dish. Bake uncovered at 350 degrees for one hour or until golden and set. Makes 6 dinner servings, or 24 appetizers.

CRYBABIES-STUFFED TENDERLOIN, WITH JELLY SAUCE

- 2 pepper-corn-marinated pork tenderloins
- 8 ounces goat cheese
- 1/3 cup chopped Crybabies
- 1 pound bacon

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Butterfly the tenderloins, and lay flat on work surface. Mix cheese and Crybabies in a small bowl. Spread the mixture on the cut sides of the pork and replace the sides to enclose cheese mixture. Wrap the tenderloins in bacon.

Place in a roasting pan sprayed with nonstick cooking oil. Roast for 20 minutes. Increase the oven temperature to broil for 5-7 minutes. Slice and serve with jelly sauce.

- Jelly Sauce
- 1 8-ounce jar apple jelly
- 1 8-ounce jar pineapple jelly
- 1 teaspoon cream
- (prepared) horseradish
- 1/2 tablespoon freshly ground black pepper

Combine all ingredients in a small saucepan and mix well. Simmer until heated thoroughly, stirring often. Serve with pork or venison dishes.



Staff photo — Jerry Larson

Tracy Sage (left) and business partner Virginia Ellis, the entrepreneurs behind Crybabies: Sweet & Sassy Jalapenos, joke around in the kitchen of Sage's McGregor home. They have been pals for 12 years.

By Terri Jo Ryan
Tribune-Herald staff writer

When McGregor moms Tracey Sage and Virginia Ellis started playing around with the idea of bottling their own "sweet and sassy" jalapeno recipe about two years ago, they tried on a lot of names.

"I really wanted to call 'em 'Slap your Pappy' peppers," recalled Sage, 45. "But when Virginia hit upon 'Crybabies' instead, I knew we had it!"

Crybabies hit the shelves in time for Cinco de Mayo 2005. The product, they claim, boasts a recipe that keeps the bite of a flaming jalapeno but balances it with the sweet tang of pineapple. In their research, they found other chefs had mixed jalapenos with cherries, peaches or strawberries, but nothing like theirs, Sage said.

"We knew what we liked, what our friends liked," said Ellis, 47. "We're just two middle-aged gals who like messing around with recipes."

But putting their product up for sale was a bigger endeavor than they had suspected.

"We didn't know what all would be involved when we first started this," said Ellis. "We thought you just cooked it up and bottled it, slapped a label on it and sold it. But that (Food and Drug Administration) is so picky!"

They lined up a commercial kitchen to use in Crawford, where they go twice a month (or more often, if need be) and prepare 120 jars of their concoction each time. A friend helped them design the labels.

Besides the business license and company paperwork, Ellis and Sage had to send the product off to Texas

A&M University to have its nutritional content analyzed for the back label and to have its shelf life determined.

In Waco, Crybabies products are available at Honeybee Ham & Deli, Uncle Dan's Rib House, Jan's Perfect Presents, Carol and Co., Spice and Texas Tasty Treats. In Temple, they can be found at Las Casas. They also are sold at the Red Bull in Crawford and in Gatesville at Swinfall's and Charisma Salon. They also are found in Salado, Dallas and Richardson.

Ellis and Sage are tickled to be included on the menu at Rosati's Authentic Chicago Pizzas in Hewitt, where Crybabies is a specialty topping.

Plus the two women have had orders from California, Mississippi, Minnesota, Colorado, Oklahoma and even Japan — from people who had received jars to try from friends. Crybabies are even headed to Iraq in the care packages local families send to their military kinfolk, Ellis said.

Both women are former teachers who earned bachelor of education de-

grees at Baylor University; Sage received hers in 1983 and Ellis in 1999. They've known each other for 12 years, "and after all this, we're still friends," Ellis said.

Ellis works with graduate students on their scholarships at the business school at Baylor. She is married to Joe Ellis, owner of Harris Creek Trees. They have three children.

Sage, a homemaker, is married to Randy Sage, a broker for A.G. Edwards. They have three children as well.

Other than saying they've had "wonderful local support" for Crybabies, the women declined to disclose their earnings on this enterprise.

"I will say that we didn't take out loans to do this. We dug into our own pocketbooks," Ellis said. Earnings have far surpassed what they expected to earn, especially in the beginning, she added.

Although their Web site is not operational yet, they can be reached on line at lucrybabies@yahoo.com.

tryan@wacotrib.com
757-9746