



Recipe adapted from **Quick & Easy Mexican Cooking** by Cecilia Hae-Jin Lee. Copyright 2011. Published by Chronicle Books, San Francisco, CA. Reprinted with permission of the publisher. All rights reserved.

Chicken Enchiladas with Green Chile Sauce

(Enchiladas de Pollo con Salsa Verde)

Makes 6 entrée servings

The tangy green sauce here complements the mild cheese and chicken flavors well. Even the pickiest of kids will gobble up this dish, so it makes for an easy weeknight meal. It's best to soften the tortillas first by frying them in a little oil, so I developed a faster way to heat them.

Twelve 5- to 6-inch corn tortillas (page 43 or store-bought)

Cooking oil spray

Vegetable oil

2 boneless, skinless chicken breasts (about 1 pound), sliced into small strips

1 teaspoon dried oregano

1/2 teaspoon salt

1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

1 onion, sliced

1 green or red bell pepper, sliced

12 ounces queso blanco, grated

One 28-ounce can green chile enchilada sauce

Preheat oven to 400°F. Coat each tortilla on both sides with cooking oil spray. Place the tortillas on a foil-lined baking sheet and bake for 5 minutes to soften them. Remove from the oven and set aside. Leave the oven on, but lower the heat to 350°F.

Heat about 1 tablespoon vegetable oil in a large skillet over high heat. Add the chicken, oregano, salt, and black pepper, and sauté until the meat is opaque on the outsides, about 5 minutes. Add another tablespoon of oil, then add the onion and bell pepper slices and sauté until the chicken is cooked through, another 3 to 4 minutes. Remove from the heat and pour the chicken mixture into a large bowl. Add two-thirds of the queso blanco and 1 cup of the enchilada sauce and toss together.

Coat a 9- by 13-inch baking dish with vegetable oil spray. Lay all of the tortillas out flat. Spoon the filling into the middle of each tortilla, dividing it evenly. Fold each tortilla over into thirds and lay the filled enchilada, seam-side down, in the baking dish. Repeat until all of the tortillas are done and the baking dish is full.

Pour over the remaining enchilada sauce and sprinkle with the remaining cheese. Bake until the sauce is bubbling and the cheese is melted, about 15 minutes. Remove from the oven and serve two to each diner.

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Corn Tortillas

(Tortillas de Maiz)

Makes Twelve 5- to 6-inch tortillas

In Mexico, tortillas are usually made fresh each day and served hot off the griddle. Once you taste these, it'll be hard to go back to store-bought again. Masa harina is a special corn flour used to make tortillas. You can learn to flatten them by hand, but it'll take some practice (although the little ladies of Oaxaca make it look so easy!). I use plastic bags to keep the dough from making a sticky mess. A tortilla press makes the job faster and you'll get nice round tortillas each time, but a rolling pin works just as well. Serve with fajitas, as wraps for tacos, or just with some salsa on the side.

2 cups masa harina
1/2 teaspoon salt
1-1/2 cups water, room temperature

In a large bowl, combine the masa, salt, and 1-1/2 cups room-temperature water. Keep mixing with your hands until the dough can be formed into a ball.

Divide the dough into 12 pieces that are roughly equal. (The best way to do this is to divide the dough in half, then divide the halves into thirds, and then divide the thirds into halves.)

Heat a nonstick or well-seasoned cast-iron skillet over high heat (see note).

Cut a large resealable plastic bag (see note) so that it opens flat and lay it on your tortilla press. Place a ball of dough in the middle, between the folded sheets of plastic. Press it into a disk. Carefully peel the dough from the plastic bag and place it on the hot skillet. Cook until the tortilla is lightly whitened (about 30 seconds). Flip with a spatula (although I've seen braver women than I just flip them with their bare fingers) and let it cook until lightly whitened, another 30 seconds, or so. Remove and place on a platter or plate. Keep the tortillas warm by covering them with a kitchen towel. Repeat until all the tortillas are cooked and ready to serve.

NOTE: A nonstick pan or well-seasoned comal or cast-iron skillet keeps you from having to use any oil when cooking the tortillas. You can also use waxed paper in place of a plastic bag when working with the tortilla press.

VARIATION: If you don't have a tortilla press, you can use a rolling pin. Place a cut plastic bag on a flat rolling surface. Put a ball of dough in the middle between the 2 sheets of plastic. Roll out with a rolling pin until your tortilla is 5 to 6 inches in diameter. Carefully peel off the plastic bag. Cook as directed above. Don't worry about them being perfectly round. Your tortillas will be a bit rough around the edges at first, but that's part of the homemade charm.