

Chicken Enchiladas With Salsa Verde

By Sam Sifton

Total Time 1 hour

Rating ★★★★★ (5,002)



Melina Hammer for The New York Times

Don't let the one-hour prep time on these enchiladas scare you. Use some leftover roast chicken, or buy a roast chicken at the market on the way home, and you'll save at least 20 minutes, making the dish a terrific weeknight feed, alongside a green salad. (At El Real Tex-Mex restaurant, in Houston, the great Tex-Mex scholar and restaurateur Robb Walsh serves his version with lightly smoked chicken, which if you can find or make is superb.) The salsa verde is dead simple to make and the rest is assembly — a task that grows markedly easier each time you do it.

INGREDIENTS

Yield: 4 to 6 servings

FOR THE CHICKEN (OR USE 1 1/4 POUNDS LEFTOVER OR STORE-BOUGHT ROAST CHICKEN)

- 2 pounds bone-in chicken thighs or breasts, or a mixture
- 1 small white onion, cut in half
- 4 cloves of garlic
- 1 tablespoon kosher salt

FOR THE SALSA VERDE

- 1 pound fresh tomatillos, husked, rinsed and cut into quarters (use canned if you can't find fresh)
- 1 small white onion, peeled and chopped
- 1 clove of garlic, peeled and chopped
- 2 serrano chiles or more to taste, seeds removed if you want it less

PREPARATION

Step 1

Prepare the chicken: Place chicken parts in a large saucepan with onion, garlic and salt, and cover with water. Heat pan over high heat until liquid comes to a boil, then reduce heat to medium and let simmer until chicken is cooked through, about 20 to 25 minutes. Remove chicken and let cool, reserving stock for another use. Using your fingers or two forks, shred meat from chicken and reserve, discarding skin and bones. (Alternatively, shred meat from leftover or store-bought roast chicken and set aside.)

Step 2

Meanwhile, heat oven to 375, and make the salsa verde: Combine tomatillos, onion, garlic, serranos and cilantro in a blender or food processor and purée until smooth, adding water as needed to thin it out a little. Season with salt to taste.

Step 3

Prepare the tortillas: In medium sauté pan set over medium-high heat, heat oil until it begins to shimmer. Using tongs or a wide spatula, place a tortilla in the hot fat; it should start to bubble

spicy, stemmed and roughly chopped

4 to 5 tender stems of fresh cilantro, with leaves, roughly chopped

Salt to taste

FOR THE ENCHILADAS

½ cup neutral oil, like canola

12 yellow corn tortillas

1 cup crumbled queso fresco or cotija cheese

1 cup Mexican crema, or use crème fraîche or sour cream

1 medium-size white onion, peeled and chopped (optional)

immediately. Heat tortilla for about 10 seconds a side, until soft and lightly browned. Remove tortilla and set on a rack set over a baking pan, or just on a baking pan if you don't have a rack. Repeat with remaining tortillas, working quickly.

Step 4

Assemble the enchiladas: Use a ladle to put about ½ cup salsa verde in the bottom of a 9-by-13-inch baking pan and spread it out a little. Roll a few tablespoons of shredded chicken into each tortilla with a teaspoon or so of salsa verde and place it seam-side down in the pan, nestling each one against the last. Ladle salsa verde over top of rolled tortillas and sprinkle with about half the crumbled cheese.

Step 5

Transfer to oven and bake until sauce bubbles and cheese is melted, about 15 minutes. Dot with crema, sprinkle with remaining cheese and, if using, chopped onion, then serve immediately.

Private Notes

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