

CHICKEN TOSTADAS WITH FRESH VEGETABLES AND CREAM

Source: Authentic Mexican by Rick Bayless

Prepared by: Kimi Nelson, May, 2016

Makes: 12 tostadas

12 Crisp-Fried Tortillas (see below)

1 large (1 ¼ pound whole chicken breast, cooked skinned boned and shredded (see below)

About 2 cups Frijoles Refritos (see recipe)

2 tablespoons cider vinegar

6 tablespoons vegetable oil, preferably part olive oil

¼ teaspoon salt

A big pinch of freshly ground black pepper

2 ½ to 3 cups sliced lettuce, preferably romaine

1 cup Thick Cream (see recipe) or commercial sour cream thinned with 3 to 4 tablespoons milk or cream

½ cup chopped onion

1 ripe, large avocado, peeled pitted and diced

2 ripe, medium-small tomatoes, cored and sliced or diced

¾ cup (3 ounces) crumbled Mexican queso fresco or queso anejo or chees like cojita, feta, farmer's cheese or mild parmesan

About 25 minutes before serving, fry the tortillas (see below). Spring the chicken with salt, if desired.

Warm the beans over low heat, adding a little water if they're overly thick. Thoroughly whisk together the vinegar, oil, salt and pepper, then toss the lettuce in this dressing.

Spread a generous 2 tablespoons of warm beans over each crisp tortilla. Top with a little chicken, then add a thick drizzle of cream, some onion and avocado. Top each tostada with dressed lettuce, tomato and sprinkling of cheese. Serve at once.

CRISP FRIED TORTILLAS:

8 corn tortillas (or 12 for this recipe) preferably stale, store bought ones

Vegetable oil to the depth of 1 inch for deep frying

Salt

Leave tortillas whole to make tostadas. Spread in a single layer, cover lightly with a dry towel to keep them from curling, and let them dry until very leathery.

Heat the oil to 380 degrees. Lay the tortillas one at a time in the oil and flip after about 30 seconds, then fry them until they are lightly browned and completely crisp, about 30 seconds longer. They are not done until nearly all bubbling has stopped.

Remove from the oil, shaking off the excess and drain on paper towels. Sprinkle with salt.

SHREDDED POACHED CHICKEN:

¼ medium onion, roughly chopped
3 cups water
½ teaspoon salt
1 medium (about 1 pound) whole chicken breast, halved
½ teaspoon mixed dried herbs (such as marjoram and thyme)
2 bay leaves

Place the onion water and salt in a saucepan and bring to a boil. Add the breast quarters and add hot water to cover if necessary, skim off any new foam that rises once the liquid returns to a simmer, partially cover and simmer for 13 minutes.

Remove the pot from the fire and let the chicken cool in the broth, if there is time. Skin and bone the chicken, then shred the meat into small pieces. Sprinkle with salt before using.

FRIJOLES REFritos (Refried Beans)

2 tablespoons rich-flavored pork lard, bacon drippings or fat rendered from chorizo sausage
½ to 1 small onion, finely chopped
1 large clove garlic, peeled and minced
2 ½ to 3 cups Brothy beans (see below) undrained
Salt, if necessary

Heat the fat in a medium size skillet over medium. Fry the onion until browned, about 8 minutes; add the garlic and cook 2 minutes. Raise the heat to medium high. Add one third of the bean and their broth to the skillet. Mash them with the back of a wooden spoon or with a potato masher. When the beans are coarsely pureed, add the next third, mash then add and mash the final third. Let the beans simmer, stirring nearly constantly, until they are thick but a little thinner than you want to serve them. The entire mashing and cooking process should take about 8 minutes. Season with salt.

BROTHY BEANS: Yields 5-6 cups

2 cups (about 13 ounces) dry beans; pink, pinto, black or other variety
2 tablespoons lard, bacon drippings or fat rendered from chorizo sausage
1 small onion diced
1 large sprig epazote for black beans (optional)
salt, about 1 teaspoon

Measure the beans into a colander, pick out any tiny dirt clods or pebbles, rinse and place in a 4 quart pan. Add 6 cups of water, remove any beans that float, and let soak 4-8 hours, until you see no dry core when you break one open. Or quick soak by boiling them for 1 minute or 2 and then letting them stand off the burner for 1 hour. Drain the beans completely.

Cover the beans with 6 cups fresh water, add the lard or other fat, onion and optional epazote, and bring slowly to a simmer. Partially cover and simmer over medium-low heat, stirring occasionally, until they are fully tender, 1 to 2 hours. If you see the beans peeking up through the liquid, add hot water to

cover them by ½ inch; without enough water, the beans may cook unevenly and tend to stick to the bottom.

Season with salt, remove the epazote and the beans are ready to serve.

THICK CREAM: Yield about 1 cup

1 cup whipping cream

2 teaspoons buttermilk

Pour the cream into a small saucepan, set over low heat and stir just until the chill is off; do NOT heat above 100 degrees (lukewarm). Stir in the buttermilk and pour into a glass jar.

Set the lid on the jar (but don't tighten it) and place in a warm spot (80-90 degrees). Let the cream culture and set for 12 – 24 hours, until noticeably thicker (perhaps almost set like yogurt or sour cream). Stir gently, screw on the lid and refrigerate at least 4 hours to chill and complete the thickening.

Cook's Notes: I love tostadas and thought this was a great recipe. Was very time consuming frying your own tostada shells, making homemade refried beans, homemade sour cream, but was worth it.

I will make my own sour cream again after finding out how easy this was. Refried beans were good too, but will only make again from scratch for a special occasion. And my local Hispanic market has good homemade tostada shells I could use when in a hurry.



