

Mexican Tortilla Soup Recipe

Note: This is NOT the creamy, cheesy chicken tortilla soup recipe common in many U.S. homes and restaurants. That kind of soup doesn't actually exist in Mexico. ☺ The following recipe is an adaptation of the tomato-based tortilla soup traditional to Mexico.

Ingredients:

6 (6-inch) corn tortillas, preferably a little old and dried out
1/4 cup grapeseed oil, peanut oil, other high smoke-point oil
1 small onion, chopped (1/2 cup)
2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
1 medium jalapeño chile, seeded, veins removed, chopped (If you can find them, dried guajillo or)
4 cups chicken broth or homemade chicken stock
1 can (14.5 oz) diced tomatoes, undrained (fire-roasted tomatoes are best)
1/2 teaspoon coarse salt (kosher or sea salt)
1 1/2 cups shredded cooked chicken
1 ripe medium avocado
1/2 cup shredded Monterey Jack cheese (2 oz) (or other mild, melting cheese)
1 cup crème fraiche, or 1 cup sour cream mixed with 1/4 cup half-and-half
Chopped fresh cilantro
1 lime, cut into wedges

To Prepare:

1. If you are starting with somewhat old, dried out tortillas, great. If not and you are starting with relatively fresh tortillas, put them on a baking sheet and put them in the oven at 200°F for 10-15 minutes to dry them out a bit. It is best to start with tortillas that don't have a lot of moisture in them. Cut tortillas in half; cut halves into 1/4-inch strips. In 3-quart saucepan, heat oil over medium-high heat. Fry strips in oil, 1/3 at a time, until light brown and crisp. Remove from pan; drain on paper towels. Reserve.
2. Heat oil remaining in saucepan over medium-high heat. Cook onion in oil 2 minutes, stirring frequently. Add garlic and chile; cook 2 to 3 minutes, stirring frequently, until vegetables are crisp-tender. Stir in broth, tomatoes and salt. Heat to boiling. Reduce heat; cover and simmer 15 minutes. Add chicken; heat until hot.
3. To serve, peel and pit the avocado. Cut into 1-inch slices. Divide half of tortilla strips among 4 individual serving bowls; ladle in soup. Top with avocado, cheese, and crème fraiche or sour cream/half-and-half mixture; garnish with remaining tortilla strips and cilantro. Serve with lime wedges.

Serves 4.