

Quarantine Cuisine Week 2: Mexican

All Quarantine Cuisine posts are written with a high degree of detail and specificity, with notes included on how to substitute or change recipes up for dietary restrictions or preferences. I generally prefer to include more detail than you might need rather than risk someone missing something vital! Each recipe was originally designed for two adults eating at least 1-2 meals a day from the foods described, and most should scale easily up or down depending on your family situation. As always, if you have any questions at all, please feel free to reach out!

Mexican Food Introduction

Mexican cuisine is a rich culinary heritage encompassing many regional styles and family variations. I can't hope to encapsulate the whole of it, and all of these recipes are coming through my personal lense, but I'm very glad to share some of my favorites. Tomatoes, chilies, corn, cilantro, warming spices, and powerful aromatics like garlic and onions stand out in many recipes, lending Mexican recipes a bright, warming, lively flavor that should appeal to many palates. I think it's one of the finest cuisines in the world and very worth exploring and learning more about!

This menu is built around assembling several *Base Recipes* (Shredded Chicken Tinga, Seasoned Taco Meat, Cilantro-Lime Rice, Black Beans, Guacamole, Grilled Veggies, and Pico de Gallo) that you can then combine and recombine into many different meals throughout the week using side ingredients like tortillas, chips, cheese, sour cream, and fresh veggies. Make as many or as few of the base recipes as you and your family would like, and then see the end of this write-up for some meal ideas and templates to work from each day!

Base Recipes

- **Shredded Chicken Tinga** — A tangy, spicy, flavorful dish made with a slow-simmered thick sauce and shredded chicken breast meat that goes great in soft tacos, quesadillas, flautas, and more
- **Seasoned Taco Meat** — A savory, rich, silky ground beef dish infused with layers of spice and flavor perfect for hard tacos, nachos, and burritos alike
- **Cilantro-Lime Rice** — Tangy, herbaceous flavors meld with perfectly cooked, fluffy rice.
- **Black Beans** — Savory and comforting beans slow-simmered in a flavorful broth until just tender.
- **Guacamole** — A creamy, flavorful guacamole that brightens up any plate you put it on
- **Grilled Veggies** — Crisp-tender veggies with a hint of char and tons of flavor
- **Pico de Gallo** — A flavorful chunky, rustic salsa made with tomato, onion, garlic, and chilies

Sample Options

- **Soft Taco Bar** — Ingredients and ideas to make a soft taco “bar” anyone can serve themselves from
- **Hard Taco Bar** — Ingredients and ideas to make a hard taco “bar” to prepare for a crowd in a hurry
- **Grilled Burritos** — If you've got a little extra time, these large burritos, griddled till crisp on the outside, rock!
- **Quesadillas** — Crispy, cheesy, ooey-gooney quesadillas stuffed however you'd like
- **Rice Bowls** — Piles of rice, beans, meat, veggies, and cheese with a *slightly* lower carb load!
- **Flautas** — Crispy pan-fried delights made with corn tortillas wrapped around a filling of meat and/or cheese
- **Chilaquiles** — A classic breakfast dish featuring fried tortilla strips, flavorful sauce, and fried eggs
- **Nachos** — There's nothing quite like a pile of tasty nachos loaded with all your favorites!

Grocery List

The following items should get you through at least a week of cooking Mexican food. Where possible, I try to note substitutions. For some common pantry ingredients, I don't list a specific amount, but I try to be precise in the individual recipes. In all reasonable cases, I try to list what the ingredient is used for, so that if you're planning to skip one or more items from the menu, it's easy to drop the associated ingredients from your shopping list!

- **Fresh Vegetables and Fruits**

- 6 medium Yellow Onions (*2 for Chicken Tinga, 1 for Taco Meat, 1 for Black Beans, 2 for Grilled Veggies*)
- 1 small Red Onion (*for Guacamole*)
- 1 small White Onion (*for Pico de Gallo*)
- 1 head Garlic (*for Chicken Tinga, Taco Meat, Black Beans, and Pico de Gallo*)
- 3 Avocados (*for Guacamole*)
- 2-6 Roma Tomatoes (*1 for Guacamole, 3-4 for Pico de Gallo, and 1-2 toppings*)
- *Optional: Shredded Iceberg Lettuce (for toppings)*
- 1 Green Bell Pepper (*for Grilled Veggies*)
- 8oz carton White Button Mushrooms (*for Grilled Veggies*)
- 1 Poblano Chili (*for Chicken Tinga*)
- 2-5 Jalapenos (*for ½ - 1 for Black Beans, ½ - 1 for Guacamole and Pico de Gallo, and 1-3 for Nachos*)
- 1 bunch Cilantro (feel free to substitute Culantro or even Italian Parsley if you have the taste receptor that ruins cilantro!) (*for Chicken Tinga, Cilantro-Lime Rice, Guacamole, Pico de Gallo, and toppings*)
- *Optional: 1 bunch Green Onions (for toppings)*
- 6-9 Limes (*1 for Chicken Tinga, 2 for Cilantro-Lime Rice, 2 for Guacamole, 1 for Pico, and for toppings*)

- **Fresh Meats and Proteins**

- 3 lb Chicken Breasts (*for Chicken Tinga; your favorite Vegan "shredded" subs well — TVP, jackfruit, etc.*)
- 2 lb Ground Beef (*for Taco Meat; I tend to go 90/10 or 85/15; vegan "crumble" style subs well*)
- ½ dozen Eggs (*for Chilaquiles*)

- **Dairy & Other Refrigerated Products**

- *Optional: ~1-2 lb Shredded Cheese(s) ("Taco" or "Fiesta Blend" is nice, along with Queso Quesadilla. Cheddar and Mozzarella work just fine, too. For toppings and in quesadillas, tacos, burritos, and flautas)*
- *Optional: Queso Fresco (for toppings)*
- *Optional: Sour Cream and/or Crema (for toppings)*

- **Pantry Goods**

- Kosher Salt
- Black Pepper
- All Purpose Flour (*for Taco Meat*)
- Cumin Powder (*for Chicken Tinga, Taco Meat, and Black Beans*)
- Paprika (*for Taco Meat*)
- Cayenne Pepper (*for Taco Meat*)
- Dried Epazote or Dried Oregano (*for Chicken Tinga, Taco Meat, Black Beans, Grilled Veggies*)
- Dried Bay Leaves (*for Chicken Tinga and Black Beans*)
- Olive Oil (*for Chicken Tinga, Taco Meat, Black Beans, Cilantro-Lime Rice, and Grilled Veggies*)
- Canola or Vegetable Oil (*for frying Chilaquiles, flautas, and quesadillas*)
- 1 28oz Can Whole Peeled Tomatoes (*for Chicken Tinga*)

- 1 6-7 oz can Chipotles en Adobo Sauce (*for Chicken Tinga*)
- 1 Quart Low Sodium Chicken Broth (*for Chicken Tinga and Taco Meat*)
- 2 lb Basmati Rice (*for Cilantro-Lime Rice*)
- 1 lb dried Black Beans (or 2 cans Low Sodium Black Beans) (*for Black Beans*)
- *Optional: Hot Sauce like Cholula, Valentina, etc. (for toppings)*
- *Optional: Red or Green Salsa (for sides and toppings)*
- *Optional: Tortilla Chips (For sides and Nachos)*
- *Optional: Corn Tortillas (for Soft Tacos, Flautas, and Chilaquiles)*
- *Optional: Small Flour Tortillas (for Soft Tacos)*
- *Optional: Large Flour Tortillas (for Burritos and Quesadillas)*
- *Optional: Hard Taco Shells (for Hard Tacos)*
- **Unusual but Helpful Kitchen Tools**
 - Citrus Juicer/Press (the handheld “squeeze-y” kind is my favorite)
 - Immersion Blender (for smoother Tinga Sauce)

Recipes

Shredded Chicken Tinga

Makes about 12 servings

Ingredients

- Water
- 3 lb Chicken Breasts (or preferred substitute)
- 2 medium Yellow Onions; one chopped roughly into quarters, the other sliced thinly
- 5 cloves Garlic; two smashed, three minced finely
- 1 tbsp + 2 tsp Kosher Salt
- 1 tsp Black Pepper, divided
- 2 Bay Leaves
- 2 tbsp Olive Oil
- 1 Poblano Chili, seeded and chopped
- 6-8 stalks Cilantro, diced (including stems)
- 1 tsp Cumin Powder
- 1 tsp Dried Epazote or Oregano
- Half a 6-7 oz can Chipotle Chiles en Adobo (freeze the rest)
- 1 28 oz can Whole Peeled Tomatoes
- 2 cups Low-Sodium Chicken Broth (or Vegetable Broth)
- Juice of 1 Lime

Directions

1. In a large stock pot or Dutch oven, bring about 3 quarts of water to a boil with the chicken, quartered onion, smashed garlic, tbsp of salt, ½ tsp of black pepper, and one of the bay leaves. Reduce heat to a simmer and cook about 10-15 minutes, or until the chicken is completely cooked through.
2. Remove the chicken from the water and reserve, discarding the rest. If you’re using a vegan substitute, you can more or less skip this entire step and just shred your product, if it doesn’t come that way already.
3. In a large stock pot or Dutch oven, heat the olive oil over medium heat. Add in the sliced onions and cook, stirring, about 8-10 minutes, or until just beginning to take on color.

4. Add in the garlic, poblano, and diced cilantro and saute for another 2 minutes. Add in the remaining 2 tsp of salt, ½ tsp of black pepper, the cumin, and the epazote, stirring for about 30 seconds to combine.
5. Add in the chipotles (and some of the adobo sauce) and break them apart with your spatula. Do the same with the tomatoes and the juice they're canned in, stirring everything and taking care to scrape up any fond cooked onto the bottom of the pot with a wooden spatula or spoon. Let the mixture simmer for 5-10 minutes.
6. Pour in the broth, add the bay leaf, and stir everything to combine well. Bring it to a simmer and cook, partially covered and stirring every 5-10 minutes, for about 15-25 minutes, to your desired thickness. For a smoother sauce, you can use an immersion blender to blitz it down early in this step (go ahead add in the broth to thin it out, but don't add the bay leaf till after blending), or leave it chunky!
7. Meanwhile, once it's cooled enough to handle, shred the chicken meat or substitute into small strips (maybe a quarter inch across and an inch to an inch and a half long).
8. Once the sauce is at your desired thickness, ladle it over the chicken/meat substitute, stirring to combine. You can go as saucy as you'd like (up to and including *all* of the sauce), but keep in mind that the recipe as written is pretty spicy, so you may only want to use about half.
9. Reserve the remaining sauce (it's great for chilaquiles in the morning) and squeeze the lime juice over the chicken-sauce mixture and mix it in. It's now ready to serve, and should keep in the fridge 3-4 days.

Seasoned Taco Meat

Makes about 8 servings

Ingredients

- 1 tbsp Olive Oil (double this if using a low-fat vegan substitute for textural reasons)
- 1 medium Yellow Onion, finely diced
- 2 tsp Kosher Salt
- 2-3 cloves Garlic, finely minced
- 2 lb Ground Beef (or preferred substitute)
- 1 tsp Black Pepper
- 1 tbsp Paprika
- 2 tsp Cumin Powder
- 1 tsp Dried Epazote
- ½ - 1 tsp Cayenne Pepper
- 3 tbsp AP Flour
- ¾ cup Chicken Broth (or Vegetable)

Directions

1. In a wide skillet or a Dutch oven, heat the olive oil over medium-high heat. Add in the onions and salt once it's hot, stirring and sauteing for about 5 minutes, or until softened. Add in the garlic and cook another minute to cook off the raw flavor of the garlic.
2. Add in the ground beef/substitute and saute until it's cooked through and beginning to brown in the oil in the pan, then stir in the black pepper, paprika, cumin powder, epazote, cayenne, and flour and stir well to combine.
3. Let the spices and flour cook through in the hot mixture for about a minute, then add in the broth, scraping at the bottom of the pan with a wooden spoon to help deglaze any cooked-on "fond" (mightily flavorful stuff!).
4. Cook, stirring, until the mixture comes to a boil and begins to thicken and dry out. Remove from heat when you can drag your spatula through the mixture and see the bottom of the pan for at least a couple of seconds before the mixture "fills in." Remove from the heat. It's now ready to serve, and keeps well in the fridge for 3-4 days.

Cilantro-Lime Rice

Makes about 12 servings

Ingredients

- Water
- 2 cups Basmati Rice
- 2 tsp Kosher Salt
- 4 tbsp Cilantro/substitute herb, finely chopped
- Juice of 2 Limes
- 2 tbsp Olive Oil

Directions

1. In a large stock pot or Dutch oven, bring the water and salt to a rolling boil over high heat. Add in the rice and stir to keep it from sticking on the bottom of the pot. Cook 11-12 minutes, or until the rice is tender throughout.
2. Strain in a large sieve or colander with fine holes. Rinse briefly with cool water to stop the cooking process and let it drain completely, shaking if needed.
3. Add half the rice to a large bowl and add in the cilantro, lime juice, and olive oil, then add the remainder of the rice on top of that. Fold the rice over itself gently with a spatula or large spoon, taking care not to aggressively stir so you don't break too many grains. Stir until the cilantro, lime juice, and olive oil are well-incorporated.
4. Serve! This should keep well for 4-5 days in the fridge.

Black Beans

Makes about 10-12 servings

Ingredients

- 2 tbsp Olive Oil
- 1 medium Yellow Onion, diced
- 2 - 2 ½ tsp Kosher Salt, divided
- 3 cloves Garlic, minced
- ½ - 1 Jalapeno, seeded and minced (amount to your preference for spice)
- ½ tsp Black Pepper
- ½ tsp Cumin Powder
- ½ tsp Dried Epazote/Oregano
- 2 Bay Leaves
- 1 lb Black Beans, soaked overnight or 8+ hours in enough water to completely cover with 1 tsp of the salt
- Water for cooking

Directions

1. In a large stock pot or Dutch oven, heat the oil until shimmering over medium heat. Add in the onions and about a teaspoon more salt and stir, sauteing for 5-6 minutes, or until softened. Add in the garlic and jalapeno and continue to cook for another minute to drive out their raw, harsh flavors.
2. Add in the black pepper, cumin powder, and epazote and stir together for about 30 seconds. Strain the beans of their soaking water and dump them into the pot, along with enough fresh water to cover completely by an inch or two. Add in the bay leaf and bring the mixture to a boil, then dial the heat back to a simmer.
3. Cook, partially covered and stirring every 10-15 minutes, until the beans are completely tender, about 1 - 1 ½ hours. Check for salt and add more if needed, then serve! Should last 4-5 days in the fridge.

Guacamole

Makes about 6-8 servings

Ingredients

- 3 large Avocados, dark-skinned and faintly soft to the touch, cut open, seeds removed, and removed from peels
- Juice of 1-2 Limes
- ½ - 1 tsp Kosher Salt
- 1-2 Roma Tomatoes, seeded and finely chopped
- ¼ - ½ small Red Onion, finely diced (depends how small; a little onion goes a *long* way here)
- ½ - 1 Jalapeno, seeded and minced (amount to your spice preference)
- 2 tbsp Cilantro, chopped (or preferred herb substitute)

Directions

1. Roughly chop the avocado halves using a “crosshatch”-style cutting pattern and add them to a medium-sized bowl. Mash them with the back of a fork or a potato masher to your preferred level of smoothness. I like mine with a few small chunks left, but many prefer it completely smooth. About midway through the mashing, add half a tsp of salt and the juice of a lime to thoroughly incorporate.
2. Add in the tomatoes, onions, jalapenos, and cilantro and stir to combine. Check the salt and acidity, adding more salt and lime juice to taste. I'd recommend adding as much lime juice as you are okay with, in particular; the acidity will help keep the guacamole from browning as quickly.
3. Cover with plastic cling wrap pressed directly onto the surface of the guac and refrigerate at least an hour before serving. This should keep in the fridge for 3-4 days at most, slowly browning on the top layer. Keep it covered!

Grilled Veggies

Makes about 6-8 servings

Ingredients

- 8 oz White Button Mushrooms, thoroughly washed and cut into ¼”-thick slices
- 1 Green Bell Pepper, seeded and sliced into thin strips
- 2 medium Yellow Onions, sliced into thin strips
- 2 tbsp Olive Oil, divided
- 1 ½ tsp Kosher Salt, divided
- ¾ tsp Black Pepper, divided
- ½ tsp Dried Epazote/Oregano

Directions

1. Heat a wide skillet over medium heat. Add in the mushroom slices “dry” (no oil) and add half a teaspoon of salt. Cook, stirring, for about 6-8 minutes, until they’ve given off water and it’s mostly boiled off. Add about ⅓ of the oil and continue to cook until they’re browning noticeably, flipping the mushrooms occasionally with your spatula to get both sides colored, stirring in a quarter teaspoon of the pepper. Remove and reserve in a bowl.
2. Increase the heat to medium-high and then add another third of the oil and add in the green bell pepper and half a teaspoon of the salt. Sear until the peppers begin to blister and soften slightly; stir in another quarter teaspoon of the black pepper and then remove to the bowl with the mushrooms.
3. Add in the last of the oil and the onions, stirring in the last of the salt. Saute, stirring regularly, until they’ve been to darken at the edge and are noticeably softened. Stir in the last of the black pepper, then add the mushrooms and green peppers back into the pan. Stir in the epazote and remove from the heat. This is now ready to serve, and should last 3-4 days in the fridge.

Pico de Gallo

Makes about 6-8 servings

Ingredients

- 3-4 Roma Tomatoes, seeded and diced
- ¼ - ½ small White Onion, diced (depends how small; you want at most half as much onion as tomato usually)
- ½ - 1 Jalapeno, seeded and minced
- 1 clove Garlic, minced
- ½ tsp Kosher Salt
- Juice of 1 Lime

Directions

1. Mix all the ingredients together well, then taste for salt. Chill in the fridge at least an hour before serving; it should keep for 4-5 days after that.

Other Thoughts and Sample Meals You Can Make

As noted above, there's a multitude of "base" recipes here, plus a ton of optional sides and toppings in the grocery list, because I like to keep things fresh and exciting for myself when I cook. If you plan your week out, you can cook 2-3 base recipes a night for 2-3 nights and have a really wide variety of food you can make using the leftovers. For instance, I'll often make the chicken tinga, cilantro-lime rice, and guacamole on the first night, and have soft tacos (with rice, cheese, chicken, and maybe some diced cilantro and onions on top) with tortilla chips and guac on the side. A night or two later, I'll cook the beans, beef, and grilled veggies to add new options to my menu.

Soft Taco Bar

Ingredients

- 2-3 small Corn or Flour Tortillas per person
- Prepared **Shredded Chicken Tinga** (warmed up)
- Prepared **Cilantro-Lime Rice** (warmed up)
- Optional Toppings, including shredded Taco, Fiesta, or Cheddar Cheese; Sour Cream or Crema; diced Cilantro; and/or diced White or Red Onion (leftover from Guacamole or Pico) or just some Pico
- Optional Sides, including Tortilla Chips and Salsa or your **Prepared Guacamole**

Directions

1. Heat the tortillas up. You can give them a quick toast in a dry skillet on both sides, just till they begin to take on a little color, keeping them wrapped in a clean kitchen towel, or you can wrap them loosely in a damp paper towel and microwave for 30-60 seconds until pliable.
2. To serve, lay out 2-3 tortillas per person on their plate, letting them drape a little over the sides if needed.
3. Add a narrow bed of about 2 tbsp of the rice (maybe over a stripe of a couple of teaspoons of sour cream or crema) to each taco, then add on a tablespoon or two of shredded cheese and two to three tablespoons of chicken. You can microwave a plate full of tacos to melt the cheese a little, then top with fresh veggies and herbs to your preference (e.g., onions and cilantro).
4. Fold the tortillas over the toppings into half-moons and serve, potentially with some chips and salsa or guacamole on the side!

Hard Taco Bar

Ingredients

- 2-3 hard Taco shells per person, toasted briefly at 300F in the oven or toaster oven till warm. “Stand n Stuff” shells are a freaking miracle of science, by the way
- Prepared **Shredded Chicken Tinga** or **Seasoned Taco Meat** (warmed up)
- Optional Toppings, including shredded Taco, Fiesta, or Cheddar Cheese, Sour Cream or Crema, shredded Lettuce, diced Tomatoes and/or diced Onions (leftover from Guac or Pico) or Pico de Gallo, and/or Hot Sauce
- Optional Sides, including a bowl of **Prepared Cilantro-Lime Rice** and **Prepared Black Beans**, maybe topped with **Prepared Grilled Veggies**, a little crumbled Queso Fresco, or shredded Queso Quesadilla

Directions

1. Ladle a couple of heaping tablespoons of meat into each taco shell, then cover them with toppings of your choice (my personal favorite is Taco Meat covered with shredded Cheddar, shredded Lettuce, diced Tomatoes, a spoonful of Sour Cream, and a drizzle of Hot Sauce)
2. Serve with any optional sides, up to and including a small bowl of warmed up Cilantro-Lime Rice and Black Beans for each diner, or maybe just some Chips and Salsa/Guacamole.

Grilled Burritos

Ingredients

- 1 large Flour Tortilla per person, microwaved for 20-30 seconds to make it pliable
- Prepared **Cilantro-Lime Rice** (warmed up)
- Prepared **Black Beans** (warmed up)
- Prepared **Shredded Chicken Tinga** or **Seasoned Taco Meat** (warmed up)
- Prepared **Pico de Gallo**
- Optional Fillings, including Sour Cream or Crema, diced Cilantro, Hot Sauce, and/or Shredded Cheese
- Olive Oil to griddle
- Optional Sides, including Tortilla Chips and Salsa or Guacamole and/or some Grilled Veggies!

Directions

1. About two-three inches from the center of the tortilla, lay down your ingredients in a piled stripe maybe an inch and a half to two inches across. Work in layers, and don't over-stuff the burrito. It looks like a lot of tortilla, but unless you relish it splitting open on you, it's best not to tempt fate! Leave about an inch or an inch and a half of space at each “end” of this stripe of ingredients.
2. My personal favorite is about a tablespoon of sour cream in a stripe on the tortilla, with 3 tbsp of rice, then 2 tbsp of beans, then 2 tbsp of Cheese, then 3-4 tbsp of meat, and a tbsp or so of pico.
3. Fold up the top and bottom of the tortilla (perpendicular to the stripe of food), tucking it over the top and bottom of the stripe. Then, working from the side closer to your ingredients, take the edge of the tortilla and roll it over, then tuck it “under” your ingredients, taking care to keep the roll very tight and to keep the folded edges you made earlier tucked into this new roll, so that the top and bottom of the burrito are sealed up.
4. Roll the burrito over itself, again, keeping the roll relatively tight and keeping the top and bottom tucked in, until it's completely rolled up.
5. Spread a little bit of oil on the burrito and add it to a heated panini griddle or skillet on the stove. If using a griddle, bring down the lid and press the burrito gently; if using a pan, just gently press it into the pan with a spatula. Cook about 3-4 minutes, until the outside is getting brown and slightly crisp, flipping halfway through if using the skillet. Serve hot with whatever sides you might enjoy!

Quesadillas

Ingredients

- 1 Large Flour Tortilla per person
- Canola or Vegetable Oil for the pan
- Shredded Cheese (Queso Quesadilla works great for this, but a mix of Mozzarella and Cheddar or a Mexican blend is also pretty good)
- Prepared **Shredded Chicken Tinga** (warmed up)
- Prepared **Grilled Veggies** (warmed up)
- Optional fillings, including diced Green Onions, Hot Sauce, Crema, or diced Cilantro, Onions, and/or Tomatoes
- Kosher Salt
- Optional Sides, including Tortilla Chips and Salsa or Guacamole and/or some Grilled Veggies!

Directions

1. Heat a wide skillet over medium heat. Place a tortilla into it and let it warm up and become pliable. Pull the tortilla out and spread a little oil on the bottom of the pan. Flip the tortilla over and place it into the oiled pan, swirling it around with your fingertips or a spatula to coat. Make sure it's making good contact with the pan.
2. Sprinkle on a coating of shredded cheese all over the exposed side of the tortilla, around a quarter to half a cup, depending on its size. Add the chicken tinga to half of the tortilla, and add the grilled veggies, if using, on top of that. Add in any extra fillings you might want, like a drizzle of hot sauce or crema, a sprinkle of green onions or cilantro, etc.
3. Continue cooking until the cheese is fully melted on the exposed side of the tortilla. Fold that half over the half with the meat/veggies/etc., pressing down to seal. Sprinkle a little kosher salt onto the crispy side of the tortilla facing upward now.
4. Continue cooking, flipping occasionally, until both sides of the quesadilla are as brown and crisp as you like. Remove from the skillet and cut into delicious, delicious triangles! Serve with your favorite sides!

Rice Bowls

Ingredients

- Prepared **Cilantro-Lime Rice** (warmed up)
- Prepared **Black Beans** (warmed up)
- Prepared **Shredded Chicken Tinga** or **Seasoned Taco Meat** (warmed up)
- Prepared **Grilled Veggies** (warmed up)
- Prepared **Pico de Gallo** or **Guacamole**
- Optional Toppings, including crumbled Queso Fresco or Shredded Cheese, sliced Jalapenos, Hot Sauce, Sour Cream or Crema, etc.
- Optional Sides, including Warmed-up Corn Tortillas, or Tortilla Chips and Salsa or Guacamole

Directions

1. In a salad or soup bowl, pile together your favorite ingredients and warm the bowl up in the microwave, if needed. My personal favorite is a bed of about a third cup of Cilantro-Lime Rice, then a few tablespoons of Grilled Veggies, then a quarter cup of Black Beans, then a couple of tablespoons of queso fresco. I warm all that up in the microwave, then top it with a big dollop of sour cream and a spoonful of Pico de Gallo and enjoy!

Flautas

Ingredients

- 2-3 Corn Tortillas per person, steamed in the microwave while wrapped in a damp paper towel for 45-60 seconds until extremely pliable
- Prepared **Chicken Tinga** (warmed up)
- Optional Fillings, including Shredded Cheese, diced Green Onions or Cilantro, etc.
- Canola or Vegetable Oil to Fry
- Optional Toppings, including Sour Cream or Crema, Queso Fresco, Pico de Gallo, Shredded Lettuce, etc.

Directions

1. In a small skillet, heat about a third of an inch of neutral flavored oil over medium-high heat.
2. Once you've warmed up your ingredients and steamed the tortillas, you'll need to work very quickly before the tortillas begin to cool and stiffen back up. Keep the extras wrapped in the damp towel while you work.
3. Like a miniature burrito, layer a thin stripe of ingredients (no more than $\frac{3}{4}$ - 1 inch across) noticeably off center onto the tortilla, almost $\frac{1}{3}$ of the way over to one side or the other. You can go almost to the edges of the tortilla with this stripe; we won't be tucking the ends in. My favorite filling is Chicken Tinga mixed with shredded cheese and diced green onions!
4. Roll the tortilla as tightly as you can without stressing it to the point that it tears. As you get each flauta rolled up, very carefully lay it into the hot oil, seam-side down. Your fingers are the best tool for this job, but if that scares you, you can set the flauta seam side down onto a spatula, instead. Set the end of the spatula down onto the pan in the oil, angled up slightly, and gently wiggle the flauta down with your fingertips (it helps to situate the flauta such that when you push it "down" the spatula, it will be going in the same direction you originally rolled it up in, so it doesn't want to "unfurl").
5. Flip each flauta after 2-3 minutes, or once the bottom half in the oil begins to brown. Cook another minute or two on the second side, then remove to paper towels to drain.
6. Serve topped as you prefer. My favorite is a drizzle of Crema, a healthy crumbling of Queso Fresco, a big spoonful of Pico de Gallo, and a few drizzles of Hot Sauce

Chilaquiles

Ingredients

- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ corn Tortillas per Person, cut into 8 triangles, then each triangle cut across the two slanting sides in half
- Canola or Vegetable Oil to Fry
- Kosher Salt and Black Pepper
- Reserved Shredded Chicken Tinga cooking sauce *or* Green Tomatillo Salsa
- 2 Eggs
- Optional Toppings, including Sour Cream or Crema, Queso Fresco, diced veggies, etc.

Directions

1. Heat about a tablespoon and a half of oil in a small skillet over medium heat and add in the chopped tortilla, tossing and turning them until they're crispy. Remove to paper towels and sprinkle with salt.
2. In the same pan, add a little more oil and crack in the two eggs, frying them to your preferred doneness and seasoning with salt and pepper to your preference. I like mine fried over medium! Remove and reserve.
3. In that same pan, add in a couple of tablespoons of the reserved Tinga sauce or the salsa and cook until it's begun to thicken and bubble. Add back in the fried tortilla strips and toss to coat. Serve them on a plate covered with the fried eggs and your preferred toppings (I like Crema, Queso Fresco, and Green Onions).

Nachos

Ingredients

- Tortilla Chips
- Shredded Cheese
- Quite Literally Anything Else You'd Like

Directions

1. Far be it from me to tell another person how to enjoy their nachos, but if I dare to suggest, I'd say you might enjoy taking a small baking dish and coating it with a thin layer of oil while you preheat your oven to 400F.
2. Add tortilla chips, shredded cheese, and your other favored toppings (I like Taco Meat and Black Beans) in layers, stacking as high as you feel safe going!
3. Add the baking dish to the oven and bake until the cheese is completely melted, about 3-4 minutes.
4. Add your favorite cool toppings, like Pico de Gallo, Sour Cream, sliced Jalapenos, Guacamole, etc. Enjoy!