Random Taco Cookbook



# Credits

* Taco image: https://unsplash.com/photos/lP5MCM6nZ5A/download
* Tacos from: https://taco-1150.herokuapp.com/random/?full\_taco=true
* Code by: Khalil

Packaged Seasonings, Pickled Red Onions, Veggies for Fish Tacos, Boiled Ground Beef, Hard Corn Shells (Traditional; US)

# Packaged Seasonings

Packaged Seasonings  
==============  
  
Lest we be accused of snobbery, let's acknowledge that a taco is a taco, and taco night can be well-served by not having to think at all.  
  
Feel free to use the pre-packaged seasoning of your choice. When I'm in an old-school mood, I head straight for...  
  
\* Old El Paso Taco Seasoning

# Pickled Red Onions

Pickled Red Onions  
==================  
  
My wife made this recipe up, after eating something similar, but if you are making brisket tacos, it is the most wonderful accessory:  
  
\_\_Ingredients\_\_  
  
\* Vinegar  
\* 2 chopped red onions  
\* 1 tablespoon of sugar  
\* a dash of chili powder  
  
Chop the red onions into rings and put them into a container of vinegar. Add the sugar and store the mixture in your refrigerator to marinate and pickle, the longer the better.  
  
Pick out the rings and place them on your brisket taco. Eat.  
  
Variations  
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Pickled onions are a favorite in the Von Doom house, too. [@littlewhirl](http://twitter.com/littlewhirl) played around with a similar starting point and we use this brine instead:  
   
\* 1/2 cup apple cider vinegar  
\* 1 T Sugar (I usually use coconut palm sugar because I'm a hippie I guess)  
\* Water  
\* 1 1/2 tsp salt  
\* 1 sprig fresh oregano and/or cilantro (optional)  
  
Slice 1 red onion on a mandolin (WORTH IT). In a bowl melt the sugar and salt with some warm/hot water. Add vinegar and 1c of filtered water.  
Add in onion, top off w/ water so that the onion is just covered.   
VERY IMPORTANT: Let sit at room temp for at least an hour. Trust me.   
  
The apple cider vinegar is a tangier but also more subtle, keeping more of the onion flavor there. And using a partial salt water brine lets it work nice for quick pickles, but also for slightly longer engagements. Leading to the most important aspect:   
  
PICKLE ALL THE THINGS  
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Seriously. All the things. Pickle your fridge. Pickle your waffles. Make. Lots. Of. Pickles.   
  
\* \_\_Cabbage\_\_ — red or green work. You only need an hour or so (like onions)  
\* \_\_Jalepeños\_\_ — seriously GTFO these are good. Add dill for a twist. Add parboiled carrots if you want to cut the spice  
\* \_\_Greenbeans\_\_ — because greenbeans are goddam delicious  
\* \_\_Toy cars — kid with an attitude? Pickle their favorite toy car. Let's see them try to cop a tude when their matchbox cars are soggy and briney  
\* \_\_Cauliflower\_\_ — personal favorite. Pickles in an hour, super delicious  
\* \_\_Baby corn\_\_ — baby corn is gross, but if you pickle it you can make jokes about how big all the other things you pickled are

# Veggies for Fish Tacos

Veggies for Fish Tacos  
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Fish tacos are a special breed, requiring different vegetable options.  
  
\_\_Assemble your veg from the following options:\_\_  
  
\* Cabbage, purple, shredded  
\* Cabbage, other shades, shredded  
\* Radishes, sliced into thin slices  
\* Red peppers, diced  
\* Cherry tomatoes, sliced (if you're a heathen)  
\* Cilantro, if it doesn't taste like soap to you  
  
And one requirement:  
\* Limes, sliced for juicing over tacos.  
  
Place out your selections and assemble into your taco. Then squeeze a lime over the top.

# Boiled Ground Beef

Boiled Ground Beef  
==================  
  
Boiling ground beef is a great way to to preserve flavor and delicious juiciness. This process requires a bit more time, but it's totally worth it.  
  
\_\_Ingredients\_\_  
  
\* 2 pounds lean ground beef  
\* 1 teaspoon salt  
\* 1 teaspoon chili powder  
\* 2 teaspoons cumin  
\* 1 teaspoon garlic powder  
\* 1 onion, minced  
\* enough water to completely cover the meat \_(Beef broth also works well!)\_  
  
  
\_\_Directions\_\_  
  
Place all ingredients in a large pan over high heat. Bring to boil. Turn down to medium/medium low heat and simmer for 1 hour. Use a potato masher to break apart the meat.  
  
Strain away any leftover liquid. If you are making this ahead of time you can place the leftover liquid in the fridge to harden the grease. Spoon off any hardened grease and add a little liquid back to the meat if you are reheating it.  
  
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\_(Credit belongs to my wife, Jamie. See the full recipe [here](http://www.jamies-recipes.com/2012/11/mexican-ground-beef/).)\_

# Hard Corn Shells (Traditional; US)

Hard Corn Shells (Traditional; US)  
======================  
  
Mistakenly thought by many to be traditionally Mexican, hard shells were actually popularized in the US in the mid-20th century.  
  
While they can certainly be made at home (if you have access to a deep-fryer), the best method of obtaining hard taco shells is to head to the grocery store.

Sriracha Salt, Pickled Vegetables, Green Chile Cabbage Salad, Lightly Seasoned Beef, Fresh Corn Tortillas

# Sriracha Salt

Sriracha Salt  
=============  
  
I actually received this as a gift, but I found a recipe to make your own.  
  
\_\_Ingredients\_\_  
  
\* 1 cup Salt  
\* 10 tsp. Sriracha  
  
Mix the two ingredients together in a bowl. Spread it out on a baking sheet lined with foil or parchment paper. Put in a 200-degree oven, then turn the oven off and let it sit overnight inside. It will clump, but place in ziplock bag and attack it with a rolling pin. Tada!  
  
The effect on most food is as awesome as you'd expect but it is especially amazing with eggs. Add it to your breakfast tacos.

# Pickled Vegetables

Pickled Vegetables  
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\_\_Whisk:\_\_  
  
\* 1/4 cup rice vinegar  
\* 2 teaspoons sugar  
\* 1 teaspoon soy sauce  
\* 1 teaspoon fish sauce  
\* Some red pepper flakes  
  
\_\_Then toss in some sliced vegetables. Suggestions include:\_\_  
  
\* cucumbers  
\* carrots  
\* onions  
\* radishes  
  
Mix, cover and chill in fridge for at least 30 minutes before using.

# Green Chile Cabbage Salad

### Green Chile Cabbage Salad with Seared Corn  
This isn't a tradition, or even particularly traditional -- except in my apartment in Oakland, where I make this for myself ever time I make pork tacos.  
  
#### Ingredients  
\* 1 green cabbage  
\* 4 limes  
\* 2 ears corn, or roughly two cups of corn kernels (adjust to desired corn-y-ness)  
\* Dried, Powdered New Mexico Green Chile, to taste  
\* Salt, to taste  
\* Olive oil  
\* Optional: some crumbled cotija or queso Oaxaqueno  
  
#### Directions  
1. If using ears of corn, strip the kernels from them with a sharp knife.  
2. Heat a few tablespoons of oil over high heat. I like to use a Dutch Oven for this, but the main cookware properties you want are heavy-bottomed and wide.  
3. Toss the corn kernels in to the oil, spread them evenly, salt very lightly and let them ride. I \_highly\_ recommend a splatter guard for this step, but \*\*not\*\* a lid. You want the corn to dry out just a little and get a good sear. It's done when it's starting to get dark, a little chewy, and probably is sticking to the pan.  
4. While the corn is going, core and chop the cabbage in to wide strips.  
5. How's the corn doing?  
6. Juice the limes.  
7. How's the corn doing? If it's not done yet, grab a beer and hang out 'til it is.  
8. The corn is done? Great. Toss it on top of the cabbage. Add a little salt, then a good hit of olive oil, then half-or-so of the lime juice. Toss in a good tablespoon or two of the green chile powder. Start stirring.  
9. You want everything coated nicely, but I don't like the salad too oily, so go easy on that. I add lime until the sour balances the sweet of the corn. I add green chile slowly -- it takes a second to rehydrate and get hot. I might add as much as a half cup of the stuff to a salad for myself or spicy food fans like me; I go easier on the spice-unenthused.  
10. Serve it! If you're in to tossing a little cheese on there, do it -- but I usually just eat it straight. Sometimes this goes on fish or chicken tacos; sometimes it's a side to richer pork tacos. It's always awesome.  
  
\*\*Note on ingredients\*\*: green chile is the gastronomical life blood of New Mexican cuisine, but it's little known in the other 49 states. I like a brand called [\_Los Chileros de Nuevo Mexico\_](http://www.loschileros.com/), which I can find sometimes in tiendas and other times at Whole Foods (go figure). The trick here is this: just don't accept substitutes. It's not the same. I've also had to accept that fresh chile is just not what this salad needs, so don't do that either (it doesn't distribute well enough across the cabbage). Do have this with cold, crisp beer.

# Lightly Seasoned Beef

Lightly Seasoned Beef  
=====================  
  
\* 500 g ground beef or chopped steak  
\* 20 g black cumin seed, ground  
\* 2 cloves garlic  
\* 15 ml white wine  
\* 4 g salt if wine is unsalted  
\* oil to coat the pan  
  
1. Heat oil in the pan.  
2. Toss in the garlic, and the beef on top of that.  
3. Add the cumin. Brown the beef.  
4. Use the splash of wine to loosen anything stuck to the pan.  
  
Perfect, lightly seasoned taco meat.

# Fresh Corn Tortillas

Fresh Corn Tortillas  
===================  
  
This is the only way to go. So worth it. Makes roughly 15 tortillas.  
  
\* 1 3/4 cups masa harina  
\* 1 1/8 cups water  
  
1. In a medium bowl, mix together masa harina and hot water until thoroughly combined. Turn dough onto a clean surface and knead until pliable and smooth. If dough is too sticky, add more masa harina; if it begins to dry out, sprinkle with water. Cover dough tightly with plastic wrap and allow to stand for 30 minutes.  
2. Preheat a cast iron skillet or griddle to medium-high.  
3. Divide dough into 15 equal-size balls. Using a tortilla press, a rolling pin, press each ball of dough flat between two sheets of wax paper.  
4. Place tortilla in preheated pan and allow to cook for approximately 30 seconds, or until browned and slightly puffy. Turn tortilla over to brown on second side for approximately 30 seconds more, then transfer to a plate. Repeat process with each ball of dough. Keep tortillas covered with a towel to stay warm and moist (or a low temp oven) until ready to serve.

Sriracha Salt, Cranberry Salsa, Sweet Potato and Apple Hash, Soyrizo, Hard Corn Shells (Traditional; US)

# Sriracha Salt

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# Cranberry Salsa

Cranberry Salsa  
===============  
  
Ingredients  
------------  
\* 1 bag cranberries  
\* 1 cup water  
\* 3/4 cup sugar  
\* half a small white onion (chopped)  
\* 1 jalepeño, chopped small (remove seeds & wash for less heat)  
\* 1 bunch cilantro (cut up)  
\* 1 lime  
  
Directions  
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1. In a saucepan, get your water and sugar boiling, then add the cranberries. Boil until the cranberries pop (5-10 minutes), then take off heat, drain, and cool. They'll be slightly jelly-like, but you don't want them to disintegrate entirely, so watch them closely.   
  
2. While the cranberries are cooling, chop your white onion, your jalepeño and cilantro.   
  
3. Once your berries are cool, they'll probably have turned gooey. If there is still a bunch of water, drain it. But it's probably turned to jelly.   
  
4. Combine everything, and give a good squeeze of lime over the whole thing. As you combine, you'll notice that the cranberries just give up their shape entirely. Also: Don't wear your finest clothing when you do this--this shit \_stains\_.  
  
5. Make adjustments based on taste here. Your main variables are:  
 \* Sweet vs tangy. Default right now is tangy. Add more sugar for sweet.  
 \* Battling the overwhelmingness of the cranberries. You've got two things going with the cranberries here: flavor and texture. More onion will add more crunch to the whole thing, and help boost up the salsa-ness. Jalepeño is your heat adjustment--seeds are your friend. But the Cilantro is your big mover here: it helps to round out the sharpness of the cranberry. Lime also helps bring down the cranberry overload.  
   
  
Orange Cranberry Salsa Holographic Varient Cover  
------------------------------------------------  
  
\* Go with half a cup of OJ and half a cup of water to boil your berries in.  
\* Compliment the lime juice with a fresh squeezed orange and then \*zest\* that motherfucker right into the salsa

# Sweet Potato and Apple Hash

Sweet Potato and Apple Hash  
===========================  
  
Sweet potatoes are my go-to taco punch-up. I was going my normal route of making small (1/4" or so) cubes of sweet potatoes when I thought: Hey, it's fall, I'm going to add an apple in there. Fuck yes.  
  
\* 2 Small sweet potatoes (you'd be amazed how little sweet potato you need for tacos)  
\* 1 Small apple  
\* One can diced green chilis  
\* A couple pinches of chili powder  
\* A queeze of honey  
\* Pat o' butter  
  
Mix this all into a pan, with about 1/4 cup of water, and boil it all up until the water goes away, toss in the butter, and continue to pan-fry until things get a little browned.

# Soyrizo

Soyrizo  
=======  
  
\* Soyrizo (The El Burrito branded 'SoyRizo' is by far the best vegan option out there)  
\* chopped potatoes  
\* green peppers  
  
Throw some Soyrizo in a sauce pan with chopped potatoes and green peppers and brown for added bonus.

# Hard Corn Shells (Traditional; US)

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Quick and Dirty Spice Mix, Chipotlé Sauce, Lettuce (Traditional; US), Baked Tilapia, Hard Corn Shells (Traditional; US)

# Quick and Dirty Spice Mix

Quick and Dirty Spice Mix  
=========================  
  
I’m not going to make a lot of big assumptions here. You own a skillet of some sort. You have some jars of jankity-ass spices from who-knows-when. You want to eat some tacos within the next, like, fifteen minutes. I got you covered, bachelor(ette).  
  
\* 2 Tbsp all-purpose flour  
\* 2 1/2 tsp. chili powder  
\* 3/4 tsp. onion powder (or 1 1/2 tsp. minced yellow onion)  
\* 1 1/4 tsp. salt  
\* 1 tsp. paprika  
\* 3/4 tsp beef bouillon powder  
\* 1/4 tsp. granulated sugar  
\* 1/4 tsp. cayenne pepper  
\* 1/4 tsp. garlic powder  
\* 1 tsp. cumin  
  
Put all this in something with a lid, add 3/4 cup of water, and shake it. Brown a pound of ground beef, then pour the whole situation in there. Stir. Cook it down until it looks like you only put in half a cup of water. You have tacos now.  
  
Vegetarians  
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I’ve made this with that soy protein “ground beef” and it does not \_surprisingly\_ taste like someone put spices on a stack of cheap bar coasters and ran it all through a blender. (Vegetable) oil the skillet when you’re dealing with that stuff, unless you’re looking for excuses to buy a new one.  
  
If you leave out the bouillon for the sake of doing things vegan-style you’ll probably want to nudge up the salt a little.

# Chipotlé Sauce

Chipotlé Sauce  
==============  
  
\_\_Ingredients\_\_  
  
\* 1 cup plain Greek yogurt  
\* Juice from 2 limes  
\* 2-3 chipotlé peppers, with surrounding adobo sauce from can  
  
\_\_Directions\_\_  
  
1. Drop all of this into a food processor, and blend away.  
2. Let sit in fridge for 30 minutes or overnight for flavor melding.   
3. Add to tacos, and anything else you'd like.

# Lettuce (Traditional; US)

Lettuce (Traditional; US)  
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In a traditional American taco, lettuce serves to add extra crunch and coolness. Favor the bulkier lettuces over leafier fare such as Bibb lettuces or mesclun.  
  
\* Iceberg Lettuce (shredded)  
\* Romaine Lettuce (shredded; maintain the stalks)

# Baked Tilapia

Baked Tilapia  
=============  
  
Oven fried fish for when you think you want to pretend you're eating healthier.  
  
\* 1 pound mild fish (I usually use tilapia)  
\* 1 cup masa  
\* 2 tsp salt  
\* 1/2 to 1 tsp cayenne  
\* 2 tsp paprika  
\* 2 tsps chili powder  
\* 2 tsps garlic powder  
\* 1/2 to 1 tsp black pepper (to taste)  
\* olive oil  
  
  
1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees.  
2. Mix dry ingredients in a bowl to make the coating for the fish.  
3. Cut fish into slices or chunks, as your taste desires.   
4. Drizzle olive oil over cut fish, and dip fish into breading.  
5. Bake for 8ish minutes and finish, if you can, under the broiler.

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Universal Taco Seasoning, Sour Cream, Corn Salad, Slow-Cooked Salsa Verde Chicken, Fresh Corn Tortillas

# Universal Taco Seasoning

Universal Taco Seasoning  
========================  
  
I got tired of buying packets of store-bought taco seasoning, so I experimented with various spices and ratios until I landed on this recipe. I keep a jar of it in the cupboard at all times.  
  
\* 6 tbsp chili powder  
\* 4 tbsp cumin  
\* 4 tbsp corn starch  
\* 3 tbsp onion powder  
\* 1 tbsp salt  
\* 1 tbsp garlic powder  
\* 4 tsp oregano (Mexican oregano, if you've got it)  
\* 2 tsp crushed red pepper  
  
Combine in Mason jar and shake well to combine.  
  
This mix works well for chicken, pork and beef, destined for the grill, oven, slow cooker or stovetop. You could tweak it a bit to target a specific meat, but I like to have a base, universal mix around. Makes it super easy to turn leftover anything into delicious taco filling: Just chop up whatever it is, toss it into a skillet, sprinkle generously with seasoning, then add a bit of water and simmer to impart flavor.

# Sour Cream

Sour Cream  
==========  
  
Cool and tart, sour cream is an almost-essential part of the traditional American taco, and many others as well.

# Corn Salad

Corn Salad  
==========  
  
\* 2 Ears of corn  
\* 1 Lime, juiced  
\* Small handful of Cilantro, chopped  
\* A few green onions, chopped  
\* Garlic salt, or Garlic AND salt. I use Trader Joe's Garlic Salt in the grinder usually.   
  
Cut the corn off of the cob, and in a mixing bowl mix together corn, lime juice, chopped cilantro and garlic salt. You can tweak any of this stuff as desired.  
  
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This is my first Github commit. I'm glad it's taco related.

# Slow-Cooked Salsa Verde Chicken

Slow-Cooked Salsa Verde Chicken  
===============================  
  
Low-effort, delicious shredded chicken based off [this recipe](http://www.skinnytaste.com/2013/04/easiest-crock-pot-salsa-verde-chicken.html). To minimize prep time, just toss in a jar of storebought salsa verde.  
  
\* 2 lbs skinless chicken breasts  
\* 2 cups salsa verde  
\* 1 tsp minced garlic or 1/4 tsp garlic powder  
\* Pinch of Oregano \_(Note: I ran out of Oregano, but the recipe still tastes great without it.)\_  
\* Pinch of Cumin  
\* Salt, to taste  
  
Add chicken to slow cooker and season with garlic, oregano, cumin and salt. Pour salsa verde over everything, cover and cook for two hours on high.  
  
Once that's ready, shred chicken. Give it another stir to cover everything in sauce, then serve.

# Fresh Corn Tortillas

Fresh Corn Tortillas  
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This is the only way to go. So worth it. Makes roughly 15 tortillas.  
  
\* 1 3/4 cups masa harina  
\* 1 1/8 cups water  
  
1. In a medium bowl, mix together masa harina and hot water until thoroughly combined. Turn dough onto a clean surface and knead until pliable and smooth. If dough is too sticky, add more masa harina; if it begins to dry out, sprinkle with water. Cover dough tightly with plastic wrap and allow to stand for 30 minutes.  
2. Preheat a cast iron skillet or griddle to medium-high.  
3. Divide dough into 15 equal-size balls. Using a tortilla press, a rolling pin, press each ball of dough flat between two sheets of wax paper.  
4. Place tortilla in preheated pan and allow to cook for approximately 30 seconds, or until browned and slightly puffy. Turn tortilla over to brown on second side for approximately 30 seconds more, then transfer to a plate. Repeat process with each ball of dough. Keep tortillas covered with a towel to stay warm and moist (or a low temp oven) until ready to serve.