

Chicken Tortilla Soup

By Natalya Drozhzhin • Updated: May 24, 2024 • 1,062 comments
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Overview

Comforting, hearty, one-pot chicken tortilla soup loaded with shredded chicken, sweet corn, black beans, and a zesty tomato–chicken broth. Finish with crispy tortilla strips, avocado, cilantro, and lime.

At a Glance

Yield	6 servings
Prep Time	15 minutes
Cook Time	30 minutes
Total Time	45 minutes
Method	One pot; stove top

Ingredients

Chicken Tortilla Soup

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 jalapeño pepper, seeded and diced
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon chili powder
- 1 lb chicken breasts (about 2 medium), whole
- 1 (28 oz) can crushed tomatoes
- 32 oz chicken broth (preferably low-sodium; bone broth optional)
- 1 (14 oz) can black beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 (14 oz) can corn, drained and rinsed
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cilantro, chopped, divided (reserve $\frac{1}{4}$ of it for garnish)
- 1 lime, juiced
- 1 teaspoon salt, or to taste

Homemade Tortilla Strips

- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup olive oil (for frying)
- 8 corn tortillas (6-inch), cut into thin strips

Toppings (optional but recommended)

- 1 large avocado, diced

- Lime wedges, for serving
- Extra cilantro, chopped
- Sour cream; shredded cheddar; sliced jalapeño

Equipment

Large soup pot or Dutch oven (with lid); large skillet or baking sheet (for tortilla strips); paper towels; tongs; ladle.

Instructions

Crispy Tortilla Strips

Pan-Fry:

1. Heat $\frac{1}{4}$ cup oil in a skillet over medium-high heat. Fry tortilla strips in batches until crisp. Transfer to a paper-towel-lined plate; season lightly with salt. Repeat, adding oil as needed.

Bake (alternative):

1. Toss strips with 2 tablespoons oil. Arrange in a single layer on a baking sheet and bake at 350°F (175°C) for about 15 minutes, until crisp.

Chicken Tortilla Soup

1. **Sauté aromatics.** In a large pot over medium-high heat, heat 1 tablespoon oil. Add onion, garlic, and jalapeño; sauté until tender.
2. **Build the soup.** Add whole chicken breasts, corn, beans, chili powder, cumin, crushed tomatoes, salt, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup chopped cilantro, and chicken broth. Bring to a boil, then reduce to a simmer; cook at least 25 minutes.
3. **Shred chicken.** Remove chicken to a bowl and shred with two forks. Return shredded chicken to the pot; simmer 5 minutes more. Stir in lime juice and adjust salt to taste.
4. **Serve.** Ladle into bowls and top with tortilla strips, avocado, fresh cilantro, and lime wedges. Add sour cream, cheese, and jalapeño if desired.

Tips

- **Leftover chicken:** Rotisserie or pre-cooked chicken works well; add shredded and simmer briefly.
- **Broth matters:** Low-sodium chicken bone broth adds depth; adjust final salt to taste.
- **Heat control:** Add extra jalapeño (or a pinch of cayenne) for more spice.
- **Pantry time-savers:** Canned corn and beans keep this weeknight-fast.
- **Avocado:** Dice just before serving to prevent browning.

Make-Ahead

The broth deepens in flavor as it rests. Make a big batch and enjoy leftovers for lunch during the week.

Storage

- **Refrigerate:** Store soup (without toppings) airtight up to 3–4 days.
- **Freeze:** Up to 2 months in an airtight container. Thaw overnight in the fridge.
- **Reheat:** Bring to a gentle boil on the stovetop; add a splash of broth or water if needed.

Nutrition (Approximate, per serving; 6 servings)

Calories	511 kcal
Carbohydrates	54 g
Protein	30 g
Fat	22 g

Serving suggestion: Pair with soft dinner rolls or extra lime wedges for brightness.