Random Taco Cookbook



### Credits

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* Code by: Adade Gbadoe

First Taco Recipe

### Universal Taco Seasoning

Universal Taco Seasoning  
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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.

### Salsa de chile de árbol

Salsa de chile de árbol  
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This is a go-to taco sauce in western Mexico and probably elsewhere. You can  
mix and match the techniques in the two variants presented here, and substituting  
or adding chiles is a ramp onto the combinatorial superhighway of Mexican food and  
can demystify the salsa bar at the local taquería.  
  
# Red  
  
\* dried whole \*chiles de árbol\*  
\* tomatoes  
\* onion  
\* \*optionally\*, garlic  
  
Take between .3 and 1 chiles per tomato, remove the stems and put them in a  
saucepan with a tablespoon or two of oil (olive, soy, etc.) The pan and oil should be very  
hot and the chiles should seem to be at risk of burning. Rotate the  
chiles around and let them get dark brown to black without actually burning them —  
this can happen quickly, which is good because your eyes, nose, and lungs  
may reach their maximum vaporized chile tolerance during this step.  
  
Add a bunch of chopped onion and garlic and lower the heat. Cut the tomatoes  
in half and throw them in with salt to taste. Cook until the tomatoes look stewed.  
If you have one of those blender wands that you can put directly in a saucepan,  
you can blend everything now (you may end up making this sauce frequently enough  
to justify the purchase of a blender wand.) Otherwise wait until the mixture  
is not hot and blend it in a standard blender.  
  
# Green  
  
\* dried whole \*chiles de árbol\*  
\* green tomatillos  
\* onion  
\* cilantro  
  
Take between .1 and .5 chiles per tomatillo, remove the stems and put them in a bare, hot saucepan.  
Toast the chiles without oil until they are dark. Add halved or quartered tomatillos, salt, and a  
tablespoon or two of water to prevent burning the chiles before the tomatillos release  
their juices. When the mixture has cooked for as long as you can stand to wait, remove  
the heat and let it cool. Blend and place in a little salsa bowl and heap with finely  
chopped onion and cilantro.  
  
One non-obvious little point is that skipping the oil in the chile roasting-toasting  
step seems to increase the spiciness of the final product.

### Drunken Green Beans

Drunken Green Beans  
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Green beans are fine. Green beans cooked in beer are better. Maybe even the best.  
  
\* 1 Surly fist full of green beans  
\* half a beer  
\* quarter cup vegetable broth  
\* 2 cloves garlic  
\* 1 Tbsp olive oil  
\* some salt, whatever  
  
First peel and dice the garlic and sauté it in the olive oil. Before it gets all burned and ruined, add the beer and vegetable broth.   
   
As the liquid comes to a boil, cut the green beans up. Add the green beans and a pinch of salt and let them simmer for about five minutes. If you like your beans on the softer side you can let it go a little longer. But the trick is to pull them right after the color starts to turn and you've just made a delicious addition to any taco.

### Asian Style Tofu or Pork Marinade

Asian Style Tofu or Pork Marinade  
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For marinade mix:  
  
\* quarter cup lime juice  
\* quarter cup soy sauce  
\* quarter cup toasted sesame oil  
\* two cloves of garlic, chopped  
\* 3 teaspoons cumin  
\* 1 teaspoon paprika  
\* Some chopped cilantro  
  
Mix with sliced tofu or pork, marinate for 30 minutes and quickly sauté.

### Hard Corn Shells (Traditional; US)

Hard Corn Shells (Traditional; US)  
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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.

Second Taco Recipe

### Quick and Dirty Spice Mix

Quick and Dirty Spice Mix  
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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.

### Mango Avocado Salsa

Mango Avocado Salsa  
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Goes great on soft shell chicken tacos with cheese (or deep-friend wantons with scallops)!  
  
\_\_Ingredients\_\_  
  
\* 2 Avocados  
\* 2 Mangos  
\* 1 Orange  
\* 1 Tablespoon Honey  
\* Garlic cloves (leave it up to your buds)  
\* Pepper  
\* 1 Lime  
  
\_\_Directions\_\_  
  
1. Chop avocado and mango into bowl.  
2. Squeeze the lime and half the orange in, add honey.  
3. Add garlic (chopped or pressed) and pepper to taste.  
4. Stir and enjoy!

### Sweet Potato and Apple Hash

Sweet Potato and Apple Hash  
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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.

### Swiss Chard

Swiss Chard  
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This is actually a Rick Bayless recipe from his cookbook \_Mexican Everyday\_, but we've used it a fair amount on those days we feel like not eating meat but still want to have tacos.  
  
\_\_Ingredients\_\_  
  
\* 1 bunch swiss or rainbow chard. Could also do spinach I guess. Probably not good with kale.  
\* 1 onion sliced thin  
\* 1/2 cup of chicken or vegetable broth  
  
Slice up the chard into small slices. In a large skillet, heat the oil on medium-high. Cook the onions until soft, plus some garlic and red pepper flakes if you want. Put the chard in the skillet, add the broth. Cover the pan and reduce the heat to medium-low and cook until the greens are wilted and almost tender (about 5 minutes). Uncover, bring heat back to medium high and cook until almost dry. Salt as necessary. Enjoy.

### 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.

Third Taco Recipe

### Sriracha Salt

Sriracha Salt  
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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.

### Salsa de Aguacate

Salsa de Aguacate  
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This is the traditional green sauce served from a Mexican taco cart. Very popular with Tacos al Pastór or Tacos de Canasta, it is a creamy, green sauce. It has avacado, but it by no means a guacamole. Usually available with other taco cart staples such as: sliced radishes, spicy salsa roja, fresh cilantro, and fresh limes.  
  
\* 1/2 Kilo of Green Tomatillos (~1lb.)  
\* 2 green Serrano peppers (optional for heat)  
\* 1 avacado  
\* 2 limes  
\* 1/2 cup crema (Mexican sour cream, thinner and sweeter than standard sour cream)  
  
Cook the tomatillos and peppers in a pot with water until soft. Drain the water out and let cool.  
  
Put tomatillos, peppers, salt, lime-juice, crema, and avacado (shelled and pitted) in blender. With lid on, blend until completely mixed and liquid consistency. Salsa should be the consistency of crema, liquid, yet slightly viscous.  
  
Pour over your tacos liberally. Refrigerate between uses.

### Tomatoes (Traditional; US)

Tomatoes (Traditional; US)  
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Adding a bit of coolness and moisture, tomatoes are a staple ingredient of the American taco. The better the tomato the more flavor they will impart, but even a sub-sandard grocery store tomato has a place in a traditional taco.  
  
\* Tomatoes (diced)  
\* Cherry Tomatoes (quartered)  
\* Grape Tomatoes (sliced)

### Marinated Portobello Mushroom

Marinated Portobello Mushroom  
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Sometimes you're throwing a taco party and you need a vegetarian option. Sometimes you just don't feel like eating meat.  
  
Since a proper taco is never overstuffed, one decent-sized portobello should be enough for three servings. Multiply accordingly, and drop your mushrooms into a big Ziploc bag with enough [salsa verde](/condiments/simple\_salsa\_verde.md) to cover. Let everything sit in your fridge for a couple of hours.  
  
Remove, season with just a touch of salt and cracked black pepper, then lay onto a grill (or a grill pan on your stovetop) over medium to medium-high heat for a few minutes on each side. Cut into thick slices, and you'll have a nice, earthy taco base.

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