

These Vegetarian Quesadillas Are Cooked Entirely on the Grill

Prep: 15 mins

Cook: 27 mins

Cooling Time: 10 mins

Total: 52 mins

Servings: 4 to 5 servings

Yield: 4 quesadillas

Everyone wants their vegetarian friends to feel welcome at cookouts, but offering them packaged veggie burgers can feel like a cop out. Enter this recipe for grilled quesadillas stuffed with grilled corn, zucchini, and gooey cheese. They're easy to make, cooked on the grill, and so delicious the omnivores are going to want in on it, too!

Grilling for Meat Eaters and Vegetarians at the Same Time

Grilling the corn on the cob at the same time as the halved zucchini can be done while you're cooking the burgers and brats (just keep them separate). Once the meat is done, brush down the grill and grill the quesadillas; an average-sized grill can fit four quesadillas at once.

How To Make Grilled Quesadillas

The trick is to use large (10-inch) flour tortillas, spread them evenly with cheese all over and then put the diced grilled veggies on half of each tortilla. When the cheese is melty and the tortilla is toasted on the bottom, simply fold the tortillas in half with the veggie side on the bottom. From there you can cut the quesadillas into wedges and serve them.

What To Serve With Grilled Quesadillas

To serve with the quesadillas, I'm nuts about this simple pureed riff on salsa macha, a spicy chile pepper, oil, and peanut sauce from Veracruz, Mexico. The recipe makes about a cup of thick, rich, and smoky-hot salsa. If you are sensitive to spicy foods, you can either reduce the amount of chipotle chilies or add canned diced fire-roasted tomatoes to the sauce to mitigate the heat.

Tips for Making Grilled Zucchini and Corn Quesadillas

- Clean the grill well — Use a stiff wire brush to clean the grill before placing the tortillas on the grill, especially if you've grilled meat on it and you're making these for vegetarians.
- How to get those grill marks — The tortillas may not get distinct grill marks on them. If this is important to you, mist or brush the bottoms of the tortillas with oil to help transfer heat and achieve grill marks.
- How to tell when the zucchini is done — The zucchini is best when crisp-tender (it will squeeze easily with tongs but still retain some structure). Don't be tempted to grill it until it is mushy.
- Which chipotles to use — I recommend La Costeña brand chipotles in adobo. Different brands may have different levels of heat.
- Make ahead — The corn and zucchini mixture can be made up to 5 days in advance. Let it come to room temperature before adding it to the quesadillas. The salsa can be made up to 7 days in advance.

Ingredients

For the Salsa

- 1/2 cup avocado or safflower oil
- 1/2 cup roasted salted peanuts
- 4 large garlic cloves, halved lengthwise
- 1/2 cup canned chipotle chilies in adobo
- 2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano (preferably Mexican oregano)
- Fine salt, to taste

For the Quesadillas

- 3 medium ears corn, shucked
- 1 medium zucchini, halved lengthwise
- 1 tablespoon avocado or safflower oil
- 3/4 teaspoon chili powder
- 2 pinches fine salt
- 4 large (10-inch) flour tortillas
- 3 cups (12-ounces) shredded Monterey Jack cheese

Steps to Make It

Make the Salsa

1. Gather the ingredients.
2. Heat the oil in a small saucepan over medium high heat. When the oil is hot (a peanut added to the oil will sizzle and color immediately), add the peanuts and cook, stirring constantly, until golden brown, 1 minute.
3. Remove the pan from the heat, add the garlic, and let stand until cool, about 10 minutes.
4. Add the chipotles, vinegar, sugar, and oregano to a blender. Add the oil-peanut mixture and blend until mostly smooth. Season with salt to taste and set aside.

Make the Quesadillas

1. Gather the ingredients. Preheat a grill to medium-high heat.
2. Brush the corn and zucchini with the oil and season with the chili powder and salt.
3. Place the corn and zucchini on the grill. Cover and cook until the vegetables are lightly charred and cooked through, 8 to 10 minutes. The corn will turn bright opaque white or yellow and the zucchini halves will squish easily when squeezed with tongs.
4. Cut the corn kernels off the cobs by holding the cob upright with tongs on a cutting board and sawing off the kernels from the cob. Discard the cobs. Chop the zucchini into small bite-size pieces. Set aside.
5. Grill the quesadillas when the charcoal is ashed over and you can hold your palm a few inches over the grill for 5 seconds. If using a gas grill, reduce heat to medium (350 F). Place the tortillas on the grill and quickly spread the cheese all over each tortilla. Spread the corn and zucchini on one half of each tortilla. Cover and grill until the cheese has melted and the bottom of the tortillas are crisp and lightly charred, about 5 minutes.
6. Fold the cheese-only side of the tortillas over the side with the vegetables and pat down to cement the sides together.
7. Transfer the quesadillas to a cutting board and cut them into 4 wedges each. Serve with the salsa.

How To Store

You can double the corn and zucchini mixture and serve it as a side dish later. Store in an airtight container for up to 5 days.

Leftover salsa can be stored in the refrigerator in an airtight container for up to 1 week.

Recipe Variations

- Add a protein—Add canned black beans or vegetarian chorizo, if desired. Don't be tempted to overload the quesadillas with fillings, however, or they will fall apart.
- Cheese substitutes—Cheddar, colby, mozzarella, or Oaxaca cheese can be used in place of the jack cheese.
- Whole grain swap—Whole wheat tortillas can be used instead of white flour tortillas.