**Chicken Tortilla Soup… Kicked Up a Notch**

My family loves [Chicken Tortilla Soup](http://catholicfoodie.com/chicken-tortilla-soup). As a matter of fact, [I posted my usual recipe for it last September](http://catholicfoodie.com/chicken-tortilla-soup). But the other day, while I was shopping at [Whole Foods](http://www.wholefoodsmarket.com/stores/veterans), I noticed a large display of Hatch chiles with a sign that read, “***Hatch Chiles: 3 lbs for $1.00.***” I was intrigued. 3 pounds of Hatch chiles for $1.00? “What’s wrong with them? Are they rotting?” I thought. I examined them and they looked fine. Apparently, Whole Foods just had an abundance of Hatch chiles and needed to get rid of them. And I was happy to help out with that. So, as I drove home with my 3 lbs of chiles, I dreamed of what dishes I could make for the week that would incorporate Hatch chiles. [Chicken Tortilla Soup](http://catholicfoodie.com/chicken-tortilla-soup) was the first thing I thought of. I also thought of making a Cream of Hatch Chile Soup with Roasted Corn, Tomatoes and Sausage. I did, in fact, make that the other day too. But I’ll save that recipe for tomorrow.

So how was the Chicken Tortilla Soup with the Hatch chiles instead of green bell peppers? Definitely hotter… *and oh so good!*

**INGREDIENTS**

* 1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil
* 1 tablespoon chili powder
* 1/2 bunch of cilantro, chopped
* 4 jalapeños, seeded and chopped
* 2 large yellow onions, chopped
* 6 to 8 Hatch chiles, roasted, seeded and chopped (reserve seeds for extra heat)
* 4 cloves garlic, minced
* 3 large tomatoes, diced
* 3 green onions, chopped
* 4 large chicken breasts, shredded (or one whole chicken, roasted and deboned)
* 1 cup of cheddar cheese
* 12 cups [chicken stock](http://catholicfoodie.com/how-to-make-chicken-stock-from-chicken-bones)
* Juice of 2 limes
* 2 tablespoons of butter (we prefer [Kerrygold](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B000CC1FM8/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B000CC1FM8&linkCode=as2&tag=holfaminsblo-20" \o "Kerrygold Butter" \t "_blank))
* 1 teaspoon freshly-cracked black pepper
* 1/4 teaspoon cayenne
* Salt to taste
* Additional cilantro and green onions to be added to bowls as garnish
* Tortilla chips (we prefer [blue corn chips](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B000EQT9MK/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B000EQT9MK&linkCode=as2&tag=holfaminsblo-20) from [Garden of Eatin](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B000EQT9MK/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B000EQT9MK&linkCode=as2&tag=holfaminsblo-20))

**INSTRUCTIONS**

*For the chicken:*

1. In a mixing bowl add the extra virgin olive oil, the juice of one lime, the chili powder, 2 jalapeño peppers, and 1/4 bunch of cilantro, chopped. Mix well and pour over chicken in a large sealable plastic bag. Mix well and allow to chill in fridge for at least one hour.
2. Preheat oven to 425. Place the marinated chicken breasts in oven-safe dish and cook for about 15 minutes on each side. The chicken should no longer be pink in the middle, but be careful not to overcook it.
3. Remove chicken from oven and allow it to cool for 10 to 15 minutes.
4. Using two forks, shred the chicken by pulling across the grain.

*For the soup:*

1. Heat butter in a large stock or soup pot on medium-bigh heat. Add chopped onions and the chopped Hatch chiles. Sauté until softened, about 8 minutes. Add the garlic and sauté for another 2 minutes.
2. Add the [chicken stock](http://catholicfoodie.com/how-to-make-chicken-stock-from-chicken-bones) and bring to a boil.
3. Add the tomatoes, the juice of one lime, the 2 jalapeno peppers, the green onions and return to a boil.
4. Lower heat, add salt, black pepper, cayenne, and simmer for 45 minutes.
5. Add shredded chicken and marinade, and allow to cook for another 10 minutes.
6. Add 1/4 bunch of cilantro to the pot and continue to simmer for 5 minutes.
7. Serve in bowls, and top with cheese, cilantro, green onions, and [blue corn chips](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B000EQT9MK/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B000EQT9MK&linkCode=as2&tag=holfaminsblo-20).
8. Optionally, you can top with sour cream.