

Enchiladas Suizas (Creamy Chicken Enchiladas)

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Total Time 1¼ hours

Prep Time 15 minutes

Cook Time 1 hour

Rating ★★★★★ (198)

Enchiladas Suizas are sort of a lie. They are neither chile-laden nor from Switzerland. The name likely comes from using an abundance of cream and cheese in the recipe, which Mexicans associate with the alpine country due to its famous dairy production. These enchiladas, a combination of lightly fried corn tortillas filled with tender shredded chicken, bathed in velvety salsa verde and blanketed with melted cheese, were invented in the early 20th century at the famed Sanborns de los Azulejos, a Mexican café chain that turned the dish into a cultural icon throughout Mexico. That salsa verde? It is swirled into cream with a simple roux to keep the thickened salsa from separating and to tame any heat that you might expect from serrano chiles. For a weeknight-friendly version, shredded rotisserie chicken can save you some time.

INGREDIENTS

Yield: 4 to 6 servings

2½ pounds bone-in chicken breasts (to use cooked chicken, see Tip)

1 medium white onion, halved crosswise

6 medium garlic cloves, peeled, divided

PREPARATION

Step 1

Heat oven to 350 degrees. Place the chicken in a medium saucepan with one onion half, 4 garlic cloves and 1½ teaspoons salt, and add enough water to cover. Bring to a boil over medium-high, then reduce to medium-low, partially cover with a lid, and let simmer until chicken is cooked through and is no longer pink, 12 to 14 minutes. Using tongs, transfer chicken to a medium bowl to cool and reserve 1½ cups broth (save the rest for another use). When cool, shred the meat, discarding skin and bones.

Kosher salt, such as Diamond Crystal

1 pound tomatillos, husks removed and rinsed

2 serrano chiles, roughly chopped

½ cup roughly chopped cilantro (leaves and tender stems)

3 tablespoons roasted sesame seeds

6 tablespoons avocado or canola oil, divided, plus more as needed for frying

2 tablespoons all-purpose flour

1 cup heavy cream

12 corn tortillas

1¾ cups (6 ounces) grated Monterey Jack or Mexican manchego cheese, see Tip

Step 2

Make the salsa: In the empty saucepan used for chicken, combine tomatillos and the remaining 2 garlic cloves and add enough water to cover. Bring to a boil over medium-high, then cook until tomatillos are dull green, 5 to 7 minutes. Drain, discarding the liquid, and transfer tomatillos and garlic to a blender. Add serrano chiles, cilantro, sesame seeds and reserved 1½ cups broth, and puree until smooth.

Step 3

Heat 2 tablespoons oil in a large deep skillet over medium-low. Whisk in flour and cook, whisking often, until fragrantly nutty and light golden brown, 2 to 4 minutes. Whisk in cream until smooth, 1 minute. Pour in the salsa, raise the heat to medium-high, and let simmer, whisking often, until the salsa is thick and smooth, 6 to 8 minutes; season with salt and turn off the heat. (To make ahead, refrigerate salsa verde for up to 2 days; reheat over very low heat, stirring frequently, before using.)

Step 4

Heat 2 tablespoons oil in a medium nonstick skillet over medium-low until hot but not smoking. Working with 2 tortillas at a time and using tongs to turn them, cook until they are soft and pliable, with edges just starting to crisp up, 30 to 45 seconds per side (avoid cooking them until crunchy, as this will make it hard to roll them). Add more oil between batches as needed. Transfer tortillas to a rimmed baking sheet lined with paper towels and cover loosely with foil.

Step 5

Grease a 9-by-13-inch baking dish. Give the salsa a vigorous whisk, then spread about 2 cups on the bottom of the dish. Lay a tortilla on a cutting board, spread ⅓ cup shredded chicken down the center, fold one side over the filling, then roll. Place it seam-side down in the baking dish, then repeat, lining up the filled tortillas tightly against each other. Spread the remaining salsa over the enchiladas and scatter the top with cheese. Bake until the salsa is bubbling and the cheese is gooey, 10 to 15 minutes.

Step 6

Thinly slice the remaining onion half into rings and scatter over the enchiladas. Serve right away.

TIPS

This recipe is a great way to use leftover cooked, shredded chicken (or rotisserie chicken) — you'll need about 4 cups (or 1½ pounds). If using already cooked chicken, you'll also need 1½ cups of chicken broth for the salsa.

Mexican Manchego is widely used for enchiladas Suizas because it melts easily. It is an unripened cheese made with cow's milk with a soft, creamy texture and mild flavor, unlike Spanish Manchego, which is an aged sheep's milk cheese. It can be found at most Mexican supermarkets, and easily swapped with other cheeses such as Chihuahua and adobera.

Private Notes

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