

Tortilla Soup

Serves 4

Ingredients

For the soup:

2 tablespoons corn oil
3 corn tortillas, 6", finely chopped
4 cloves garlic, peeled and chopped
2 tablespoons fresh cilantro, chopped
1 teaspoon dried epazote or 1/2 teaspoon dried oregano
1 cup onion, chopped
2 cups fresh tomato, seeded and chopped
1/4 teaspoon cumin
1 tablespoon chili powder
2 whole bay leaves
3 tablespoons tomato paste
5 1/2 cups chicken stock

For toppings:

8 ounces cooked chicken, shredded
4 ounces cheddar cheese, grated
4 tablespoons sour cream
1/2 cup fresh salsa

For the fresh salsa:

1 cup fresh tomato, chopped
1/4 cup fresh cilantro, chopped
1 teaspoon serrano pepper, seeded and chopped
3 tablespoons green onion, cleaned and finely sliced
1 tablespoon fresh lime juice
salt and pepper

For the tortillas strips:

2 corn tortillas, 6"
cooking spray oil

Instructions

To make the soup: heat the corn oil in a large saucepan over medium heat. Add the chopped tortillas, garlic, cilantro and epazote and cook until the tortilla pieces are soft. Add the onion and fresh tomatoes and bring to a boil. Add the cumin, chili powder, bay leaves, tomato paste and chicken stock. Bring to a boil again, then reduce heat to simmer. Add salt and pepper to taste, and cook, stirring occasionally, for about 30 minutes. Remove the bay leaves from the soup. Either using an immersion blender or a stand

blender puree the soup until smooth. Taste for seasoning and adjust as needed. At this point the soup is ready.

To make the salsa: mix together the chopped tomato, cilantro, serrano, green onion and lime juice. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

To make the tortilla strips: heat oven to 400 degrees. Cut the tortillas into 1/4" wide strips. Place them on a baking sheet and coat them with spray oil. Bake until crisp, about 5 to 6 minutes.

To serve: place soup in individual bowls. Top with shredded chicken, cheese, sour cream, salsa and tortillas strips. Add a squeeze of fresh lime juice if desired.

Optional toppings: avocado slices, radish slices, chopped fresh cilantro, roasted chile slices or roasted corn. Use your imagination.

Short on time? Buy a roasted chicken and fresh salsa from your grocery store.

This soup is wonderful for a group or party. Make lots of the base soup. Put out bowls of chicken, cheese and lots of optional toppings along with crispy tortilla strips. As an appetizer serve in mugs, for the main course serve in bowls. Let your guests choose their toppings.