



Chicken Tortilla Soup

January 12, 2023

There are few bowls as comforting as a piping hot serving of chicken tortilla soup. This version highlights the fruity and mild flavors of dried chilies, which lend a more complex taste than a chili powder blend. Poaching the chicken while the broth cooks, imparts flavor to the mild chicken breast, but also eliminates the need to cook it separately. Topping the soup with all sorts of bits and bobs is part of the fun of tortilla soup—especially letting some creamy chihuahua cheese melt into the hot broth.

Serves 4-6

Ingredients:

- 2 large dried pasilla or ancho chilies, stemmed and seeded
 - 2 dried guajillo chilies, stemmed and seeded
 - 1 (15oz) can of diced tomatoes (preferably fire-roasted)
 - 1 white onion, sliced ¼" inch thick
 - 3 large garlic cloves, peeled
 - 2 carrots, thinly sliced
 - 2 ribs of celery, thinly sliced
 - 2 quarts (8 cups) chicken broth (homemade or store-bought low-sodium)
 - 1 large sprig of Epazote (or a few sprigs of cilantro)
 - 1 teaspoon dried oregano
 - 3 boneless, skinless chicken breasts (about 1 ½ lbs)
 - ¼ cup chopped fresh cilantro
- Kosher salt & freshly ground black pepper
Neutral oil

FOR SERVING:

Diced Avocado, Cotija or Chihuahua cheese, Crumbled Tortilla chips, Sliced Radish, Shredded Cabbage, Lime Wedges

Method:

1. Tear the chilies in half lengthwise and discard the seed pod, stems, and seeds. Toast them in a hot dry pan over medium heat, pressing them flat occasionally, so they get full contact with the hot surface of the pan. Flip and do the same on all sides. Break the toasted chilies into pieces and add to the jar of a blender, along with the tomatoes and their juice.
2. In a medium saucepan or dutch oven, heat two tablespoons of neutral oil over medium-high heat. Smash garlic cloves and add to oil, along with sliced onions. Cook until golden, stirring frequently, about 6 minutes. Remove onion and garlic with a slotted spoon, trying to drain off as much oil as possible. Transfer to the blender jar with the chilies and tomatoes. Blend the mixture until smooth.
3. Raise the heat of the saucepan/dutch oven to medium-high. Once it's really hot, add the chili puree (it will sputter and sizzle) and stir almost constantly until it thickens to the

WHAT'S 4 DINNER?

#RECIPESTHATDISH

consistency of tomato paste. This should take between 7 and 10 minutes (lower the heat to medium-low if it's sputtering too much). Add broth, epazote, oregano, and season with salt (usually about a teaspoon, depending on saltiness of the broth used). Bring the pot to a boil, then reduce heat to medium-low. Slide chicken breasts into broth and let pot come to a gentle simmer. Poach chicken in the broth for 10 - 12 minutes, or until chicken is fully cooked.

4. Remove chicken breasts to a plate or cutting board. Once cool enough to handle, shred with two forks or dice. This is a personal preference. Remove sprigs of epazote from the pot and discard.
5. Meanwhile, add sliced carrots and celery to the broth. Simmer until slightly softened, about 5 minutes. Return chicken to the pot to warm through (along with any juices that may have collected), and add chopped cilantro just before serving. Ladle the soup into bowls and serve with toppings, as desire.