

Chilaquiles

by Joseph Erdos



For those who love Mexican food, there's nothing better than finding a good Mexican restaurant to frequent regularly. That's because foreign cuisine can seem tough to tackle at home, especially the unique Mexican. But sometimes the craving hits without notice and you want something more than salsa and chips. For me that's when I get the urge to make authentic Mexican food at home. I have yet to master the cuisine, but rather than hit the fast-food chain with the bell or an expensive restaurant, I make my favorite dish in my own kitchen. Chilaquiles is the dish I've found really easy and successful for a beginner in south-of-the-border cooking.

Chilaquiles, a Mexican dish purposely invented to repurpose day-old tortillas, is also the perfect dish for using leftover Thanksgiving turkey or chicken. Made up of fried tortillas, shredded chicken, tomatillo salsa, and cheese, it can resemble a lasagne when layered in a casserole dish. But for faster results, chilaquiles can also be put together in tortilla stacks and placed in a hot oven just to melt the cheese and warm it through. When I first tasted chilaquiles at a restaurant, it hit my comfort spot immediately. Once I found a recipe by Daisy Martinez, I knew I had to try making it for myself. It's a dish that can make a person or—if you're willing to share—an entire family very happy.

The recipe is completely up to interpretation. The dish can be made with either green or red salsa. For me it has to be salsa verde made with tomatillos. The salsa is also used in many Mexican recipes such as my other favorite, enchiladas suizas. The salsa can also be served with chips. Instead of poultry, shredded pork works well. Any good melting cheese can be used, but I love the crumbly quality of queso fresco. It looks like feta or ricotta cheese, but it does melt unlike those two. After making this dish Mexican cooking just seems a but more easy to tackle. In the end it's all about finding the comfort in uncomplicated food.

Chilaquiles

Adapted from [Daisy Cooks](#) by Daisy Martinez.

Chilaquiles

by Joseph Erdos

1-1/2 pounds tomatillos
1 medium sweet onion, roughly chopped
4 garlic cloves
1 jalapeño, seeded
1 bunch cilantro plus more for garnish
1 handful mint leaves
fine sea salt
18 6-inch corn tortillas
canola oil
3 cups shredded cooked chicken or turkey
8 ounces queso fresco
sour cream, for serving
sliced red onions, for garnish

To make the salsa, remove husks from tomatillos. Wash, core, and chop into small chunks. Add to blender and pulse until completely smooth. Add onion and garlic; blend until smooth. Add jalapeño, cilantro, and mint; blend until smooth. Pour into a saucepan and warm over medium heat. Season with salt.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Brush a casserole dish with oil.

Warm oil in a large skillet set over high heat. Fry the tortillas until golden and crisp, about 3 minutes per side.

Layer casserole dish with six fried tortillas per layer. Then top with chicken, salsa, and cheese. Repeat two more layers. The top layer should have no chicken. Bake for 20 minutes until cheese has melted and casserole is warmed through. Serve with sour cream and garnish with sliced red onions and cilantro.

Yield: 6 servings.

Joseph Erdos is a New York–based writer and editor, but above all a gastronome and oenophile. He shares his passion for food on his blog, [Gastronomer's Guide](#), which features unique recipes and restaurant reviews among many other musings on the all-encompassing topic of food.