

Easy Chicken Street Tacos: My Favorite Weeknight Meal

1.5 lbs boneless skinless chicken thighs



TIME
30 min

PRINT
Recipe Card

SAVE
PDF

SOURCE
ChefManiac

INGREDIENTS

For the Chicken Marinade:

- 1.5 lbs boneless skinless chicken thighs
- 1/4 cup fresh orange juice
- 1/4 cup fresh lime juice
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 tablespoon chili powder
- 1 teaspoon smoked paprika
- 1 teaspoon cumin
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/2 teaspoon onion powder
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper
- 1 chipotle in adobo, minced (optional, for a smoky kick)

For Serving:

- 12 small corn or flour tortillas
- 1 cup finely chopped white onion
- 1/2 cup fresh cilantro, chopped
- 1/2 cup crumbled cotija cheese
- 1 lime, cut into wedges

Optional Toppings:

- Avocado slices or guacamole
- Your favorite salsa or a simple salsa verde
- Sour cream or Mexican crema

Swaps and Notes:

Chicken: Boneless, skinless chicken thighs are my preference here because they stay juicy and tender. You can use chicken breasts, but be careful not to overcook them.

Marinade: The combination of orange and lime juice is a must! It tenderizes the chicken and provides a vibrant, citrusy flavor. The chipotle in adobo is optional, but it adds a wonderful smoky heat.

Tortillas: Small street taco-sized tortillas work best for this. I love corn tortillas, but a good flour tortilla is also delicious.

Toppings: The finely chopped white onion, cilantro, and cotija cheese are classic and essential for an authentic street taco experience. Don't skip them!

Step-by-Step Instructions:

Marinate the Chicken: In a large bowl or a resealable plastic bag, combine the orange juice, lime juice, olive oil, chili powder, smoked paprika, cumin, garlic powder, onion powder, salt, black pepper, and minced chipotle in adobo (if using). Add the chicken thighs and toss to coat them completely. Marinate in the refrigerator for at least 30 minutes, or up to 4 hours.

Cook the Chicken: Remove the chicken from the marinade and pat it dry with a paper towel. Discard the leftover marinade. Heat a large skillet or grill pan over medium-high heat. Add the chicken and cook for 5-7 minutes per side, or until it's cooked through and has a nice char on the outside.

Shred the Chicken: Once the chicken is cooked, transfer it to a cutting board. Let it rest for a few minutes, then use two forks to shred the chicken into bite-sized pieces.

Warm the Tortillas: While the chicken is resting, warm your tortillas. You can do this by wrapping them in a damp paper towel and microwaving for about 30 seconds, or by heating them in a dry skillet for 15-20 seconds per side.

Assemble the Tacos: Place the warm tortillas on a platter. Fill each one with a generous amount of shredded chicken. Top with finely chopped white onion, fresh cilantro, and crumbled cotija cheese.

Serve: Serve the tacos immediately with fresh lime wedges for squeezing and any other optional toppings you like.

DIRECTIONS

1. **Marinate the : Chicken:** In a large bowl or a resealable plastic bag, combine the orange juice, lime juice, olive oil, chili powder, smoked paprika, cumin, garlic powder, onion powder, salt, black pepper, and minced chipotle in adobo (if using). Add the chicken thighs and toss to coat them completely. Marinate in the refrigerator for at least 30 minutes, or up to 4 hours.
2. **Cook the : Chicken:** Remove the chicken from the marinade and pat it dry with a paper towel. Discard the leftover marinade. Heat a large skillet or grill pan over medium-high heat. Add the chicken and cook for 5-7 minutes per side, or until it's cooked through and has a nice char on the outside.
3. **Shred the : Chicken:** Once the chicken is cooked, transfer it to a cutting board. Let it rest for a few minutes, then use two forks to shred the chicken into bite-sized pieces.
4. **Warm the : Tortillas:** While the chicken is resting, warm your tortillas. You can do this by wrapping them in a damp paper towel and microwaving for about 30 seconds, or by heating them in a dry skillet for 15-20 seconds per side.
5. **Assemble the : Tacos:** Place the warm tortillas on a platter. Fill each one with a generous amount of shredded chicken. Top with finely chopped white onion, fresh cilantro, and crumbled cotija cheese.
6. **Serve:** Serve the tacos immediately with fresh lime wedges for squeezing and any other optional toppings you like.
7. **Tips for Success: Don't Over-Marinate:** While marinating is great for flavor, the citrus in the

marinade can start to "cook" the chicken if it sits for too long. 4 hours is the sweet spot.

8. **Pat : Dry the Chicken:** Patting the chicken dry before cooking helps it get a better sear and a more flavorful crust.
9. **Warm the : Tortillas:** Warm tortillas are a non-negotiable for good street tacos. They are softer, more pliable, and taste better.
10. **Cut : Your Toppings Finely:** Finely chopped onions and cilantro are a hallmark of street tacos. The small pieces ensure you get a little bit of everything in each bite.
11. **Serving Suggestions and Pairings:** These chicken street tacos are a fantastic meal on their own. You can serve them with a side of rice and beans, or for a fun, casual meal, set out all the toppings on a large platter and let everyone build their own. This is a perfect theme for a party, much like a walking taco bar.
12. **Nutritional Information (per serving, approximate):**
Calories: 300 kcal
13. **Carbohydrates:** 25g
14. **Protein:** 25g
15. **Fat:** 12g
16. **Saturated : Fat:** 4g
17. **Cholesterol:** 70mg
18. **Sodium:** 450mg
19. **Fiber:** 2g
20. **Sugar:** 2g
21. **Disclaimer:** Nutritional values are estimates and can vary based on specific ingredients and portion sizes.
22. **Storage and Leftover Tips:** Leftover chicken and toppings can be stored separately in airtight containers in the refrigerator for up to 3 days. To reheat, warm the chicken gently in a skillet. You can then assemble fresh tacos as needed.
23. **More Recipes You'll Love:** If you love easy and delicious meals with a Mexican-inspired twist, you might also enjoy these other recipes:
24. **This : Mexican Chicken and Rice Casserole** is my favorite one-pan dinner that's always a hit
25. **These : Chicken Enchiladas** are my go-to for cozy, crowd-pleasing dinners

SWAPS & NOTES

Chicken: Boneless, skinless chicken thighs are my preference here because they stay juicy and tender.

You can use chicken breasts, but be careful not to overcook them.

Marinade: The combination of orange and lime juice is a must! It tenderizes the chicken and provides a vibrant, citrusy flavor.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

Don't Over-Marinate: While marinating is great for flavor, the citrus in the marinade can start to "cook" the chicken if it sits for too long. 4 hours is the sweet spot.

Pat Dry the Chicken: Patting the chicken dry before cooking helps it get a better sear and a more flavorful crust.

Warm the Tortillas: Warm tortillas are a non-negotiable for good street tacos.

They are softer, more pliable, and taste better.

More recipes: [ChefManiac.com](https://chefmaniac.com)

Original recipe: <https://chefmaniac.com/easy-chicken-street-tacos-my-favorite-weeknight-meal/>