

Crispy Chicken Tacos with Spicy Taco Sauce and Fresh Pico de Gallo

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OVEN
200°F

TIME
1 min

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INGREDIENTS

For the Chicken:

2 lb boneless chicken thighs, cut into small pieces

Salt to taste

1 tsp smoked paprika

1 tsp chili powder

1 tbsp garlic powder

1 tsp black pepper

2 tbsp freshly minced garlic

3 tbsp oil (plus more for cooking)

For the Pico de Gallo:

1 onion, finely chopped and rinsed

1 tomato, finely diced

2 tbsp chopped cilantro

1 tbsp lemon or lime juice

$\frac{1}{8}$ tsp black pepper

For the Spicy Taco Sauce:

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup mayonnaise

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup sour cream

2-3 tbsp hot sauce (adjust to taste)

1 tbsp lemon juice

2-3 tbsp water (to thin)

1 tsp freshly chopped cilantro

To Assemble:

18-20 mini tortillas

1 cup shredded mozzarella cheese

Oil for frying

DIRECTIONS

1. Prepare the Chicken: In a large bowl, mix chicken pieces with salt, smoked paprika, chili powder, garlic powder, and black pepper. Toss well to coat evenly.
2. Cook the Chicken: Heat oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add minced garlic and sauté for about 1 minute until fragrant. Add the seasoned chicken and cook, stirring occasionally, until fully cooked and slightly crispy on the edges (about 8-10 minutes). Set aside.
3. Make the Pico de Gallo: In a bowl, combine chopped onion, diced tomato, cilantro, lemon or lime juice, salt, and black pepper. Mix well and refrigerate until ready to serve.
4. Prepare the Spicy Taco Sauce: In a bowl, whisk together mayonnaise, sour cream, hot sauce, smoked paprika, salt, black pepper, garlic powder, and lemon juice. Add water gradually until the sauce reaches a smooth, drizzle-friendly consistency. Stir in chopped cilantro.
5. Assemble & Fry the Tacos: Heat a thin layer of oil in a skillet over medium heat. Place a tortilla in the pan and sprinkle mozzarella over half of it. Add cooked chicken on top of the cheese. Fold the tortilla over and cook until golden brown and crispy on both sides, about 2-3 minutes per side.
6. Repeat with remaining tortillas.
7. Serve: Top with fresh pico de gallo and drizzle generously with spicy taco sauce. Serve immediately while hot and crispy.

SWAPS & NOTES

Chicken breasts can be substituted for thighs, but thighs stay juicier.

Swap mozzarella for Monterey Jack or Oaxaca cheese for a more traditional flavor.

Adjust hot sauce levels depending on your heat preference.

Add a pinch of cumin to the chicken seasoning.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

Don't overcrowd the pan when cooking chicken-this helps achieve crispy edges.

Let the cheese melt slightly before folding to help seal the taco.

Keep finished tacos warm in a 200°F oven while cooking the rest.

Use freshly squeezed citrus juice for the brightest pico flavor.

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

Original recipe: <https://chefmaniac.com/crispy-chicken-tacos-with-spicy-taco-sauce-and-fresh-pico-de-gallo/>