



Ten Minute Tortilla Soup

By Melissa D'Arabian

I owe the idea to well-meaning fans, who over the years would approach me to thank me for the genius of making 10-minute-meals. I never had the heart to correct them: I hosted Ten Dollar Dinners. Ten-minute meals, I always mused, would be about a thousand versions of PB&J, which sounded like hard television to pitch my producer. But the idea marinated. And then it became a challenge: what could I make in 10 minutes that wouldn't be a PB&J (no disrespect to the sandwich-anthem of my childhood)?

While most of my recipes are weeknight-friendly — that's simply how I cook with four kiddos to feed before the activity flurry — I decided to create recipes that were extra quick for those nights when even a half hour seems impossible to find.

Today's recipe is one of the dinners that came from this project. Ten-Minute Tortilla Soup is filling comfort food that I feel good about serving my family. It's simple but tasty, and my kids love it.

I'll caveat the 10 minutes by saying that the dinner does take advantage of some prepared items, such as purchased salsa, canned black beans and leftover chicken. But these items are healthy pantry staples that you probably have on hand, and have a long shelf-life, including the chicken: freezing up chicken leftovers or rotisserie chicken for weeknight dinners is an excellent habit for weeknight cooks anyway. And, the recipe is pretty

flexible. Skip the cheese and add avocado cubes, if you prefer, or if that's what you have on hand. Use ground beef instead of chicken. Or even Thanksgiving turkey leftovers. Make it spicy or mild. However you choose, I promise you this: it will be quick.

Ingredients:

3 cups low-sodium chicken broth
4 corn tortillas (about 5-inch diameter), cut into quarters
1/2 cup prepared mild (or medium) red salsa
1/4 cup prepared mild (or medium) green salsa
1 tablespoon lime or lemon juice
1 cup cooked black beans, rinsed and drained if canned
1 cup shredded or cubed cooked chicken
1/4 cup lowfat Greek yogurt
1/4 cup shredded jack cheese
1 tablespoon pepitas (pumpkin seeds), or other seed or crushed tortilla chip fresh cilantro for garnish, if desired

Heat the broth and tortillas in a saucepan over medium high heat to simmer. Simmer for 1-2 minutes to soften tortilla. Pour the mixture into a blender, and add the salsas and lime juice. Very carefully blend the mixture until smooth, about one minute. (Do not fill the blender more than halfway with hot liquids and do not cover the blender completely; use a kitchen towel to help.) Pour the mixture back into the pan, add the chicken and beans and reheat for another two minutes on medium high heat. Pour the soup into individual bowls, and top with the yogurt, cheese, pepitas and cilantro, and serve. - AP/CP

Try This Full-Flavoured Chocolate Sheet Cake



By America's Test Kitchen

This chocolate sheet cake requires that you use Dutch-processed cocoa powder. What exactly is that? A process called Dutching, which was invented in the 19th century by a Dutch chemist and chocolatier named Coenraad Van Houten, raises cocoa powder's pH level, which gives the cocoa a fuller flavour and deeper colour.

Dutch-processed cocoa (sometimes called "alkalized" or "European-style" cocoa) is the best choice for most baked goods.

Ingredients:

Vegetable oil spray
1 1/2 cups sugar
1 1/4 cups all-purpose flour
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 1/3 cups bittersweet or semi-sweet chocolate chips
1 cup whole milk
3/4 cup Dutch-processed cocoa powder
2/3 cup vegetable oil
4 large eggs
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
Milk Chocolate Frosting

Directions:

Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 325 F. Spray bottom and sides of 13-by-9-inch metal baking pan with

vegetable oil spray.

In medium bowl, whisk together sugar, flour, baking soda, and salt. In large saucepan, combine chocolate chips, milk, and cocoa. Place saucepan over low heat and cook, whisking often, until chocolate chips are melted and mixture is smooth, about 5 minutes.

Turn off heat. Slide saucepan to cool burner and let mixture cool slightly, about 5 minutes.

Add oil, eggs, and vanilla to saucepan with chocolate mixture and whisk until smooth, about 30 seconds.

Add flour mixture and whisk until smooth, making sure to scrape corners of saucepan.

Use rubber spatula to scrape batter into greased baking pan and smooth top (ask an adult for help because saucepan will be heavy). Place baking pan in oven. Bake until toothpick inserted in centre comes out with few crumbs attached, 30 to 35 minutes.

Use oven mitts to remove baking pan from oven (ask an adult for help). Place baking pan on cooling rack and let cake cool completely in pan, about 2 hours.

Use icing spatula to spread frosting evenly over cooled cake (see photo, right). Cut cake into pieces and serve.

Milk Chocolate Frosting:

This recipe calls for just three ingredients. Don't use salted butter in this recipe.

11/3 cups milk chocolate chips
1/3 cup heavy cream
8 tablespoons unsalted butter, cut into 8 pieces and softened

Gather cooking equipment:
Large microwave-safe bowl
Rubber spatula
Whisk
Electric mixer

In large microwave-safe bowl, combine chocolate and cream. Heat microwave at 50 per cent power for 1 minute. Stop microwave and stir with rubber spatula. Heat in microwave at 50 per cent power until melted, 1 to 2 minutes.

Remove bowl from microwave. Add softened butter to chocolate mixture and use whisk to stir and break up large butter pieces. Let sit until butter is fully melted, about 5 minutes. Whisk until completely smooth.

Refrigerate frosting until cooled and thickened, about 1 hour. Use electric mixer to beat frosting on medium-high speed until frosting is light and fluffy, 30 seconds.

This recipe appears in the "Complete Cookbook for Young Chefs." (Carl Tremblay/America's Test Kitchen via AP)

French Version Of Peel & Eat Shrimp With Delectable Sauce

By Elizabeth Karmel

This is my French-flavoured version of peel 'n' eat shrimp. The sauce is delicious and warrants a whole baguette just for sopping up!

It's one of those summer dishes that I make frequently for friends and family. The dish pays homage to one of my favourite

places on earth, the South of France, where pastis was born.

The flavours of pastis — the anise-flavoured aperitif from the south of France — and big, fat jumbo shrimp in the shell complement each other.

Ricard is the pastis brand most commonly available in the states, but if you can't find it, you can use its cooking cousin,



Pernod. Pernod is a useful kitchen staple, and is great paired with shellfish, chicken, mushrooms and spinach — anything that is good seasoned with tarragon.

I leave the shrimp in the shell to protect it from the heat, and because much of the flavour is in the shell. The shrimp can cook longer if left in the shell, absorbing more of the flavours of the fragrant sauce — plus, it is fun to peel and eat the shrimp once they are cooked.

I place the shrimp in the bottom of a gratin dish and pour a full-flavoured portion of pastis, olive oil, garlic, fennel seed, green peppercorns, tarragon and coarse sea salt over it. Once the shrimp are soaked in the sauce, I place the gratin dish in a preheated grill or oven, and let them cook for 15-20 minutes, depending on their size. You'll know when the shrimp are done when they are curled up and pink. It is better to take them out a little under-done than over-done. The smell is intoxicating!

Serve the shrimp hot-off-the-grill in the gratin dish, and soak up the sauce with a loaf of crusty French bread.

PASTIS SHRIMP

Grilling Method: indirect-medium high = 2/3 cup extra-virgin olive oil, plus extra for shrimp

1/4 cup pastis (either Ricard or Pernod)
8 cloves of fresh garlic, grated

2 teaspoons fennel or anise seeds
2 tsp whole green peppercorns
1/4 cup chopped fresh tarragon, plus more for serving

24-26 jumbo shrimp or tiger shrimp in the shells (the bigger, the better, about 1.5 pounds)

2 teaspoons coarse sea salt

Crusty baguette

If you prefer to cook this indoors, pre-heat your oven to 425 degrees Fahrenheit.

Whisk together the oil, pastis, garlic, fennel, peppercorns and tarragon. Toss the cleaned and dry shrimp in a bowl with a little oil and the salt. Lay the shrimp in one layer in a shallow gratin dish or casserole (a Pyrex is fine). Pour the pastis mixture evenly over the shrimp. Place the gratin dish in the centre of the cooking grate (or in your oven) and cook about 15-20 minutes, turning the shrimp over once halfway through the cooking time.

Take the dish out of the grill or oven as soon as the shrimp are done. You know they are done when they are pink, their tails are curled and they are just cooked through. Do not overcook them.

Serve the dish family style on a table spread with newspapers or something that washes easily — this dish can get messy! And don't forget to sop up the sauce with a crusty baguette.

Pic: (AP Photo/Richard Drew)



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