

Fun and flavorful twist on classic quesadillas



Tequila-Lime Chicken Thigh Quesadillas

Photo Susie Iventosch

By Susie Iventosch

This is a fun and spicy recipe for quesadillas! Loaded with a trifecta of fresh and roasted chili peppers, diced grilled chicken thighs, grilled onions, Chipotle Ranch dressing, and mixed Mexican cheese, it's a flavorful proposition, for sure. My son Joel came up with this delicious recipe and we've been tweaking it ever since. This version is where we've landed lately. We really love having both fresh and roasted peppers in this dish for flavor and crunch. You can also add grilled corn if you have some extra from the last time you barbecued corn, and the grilled red onions really make the flavors come to life. (This was a last-minute addition, after we'd taken the photos.) These quesadillas are pretty filling, so we just eat one per person, but if you're

feeling super hungry, count on one and a half to two per person. This recipe makes four quesadillas.

The secret sauce is the chipotle ranch dressing, which adds great flavor, but also binds the chicken and veggies together before making the quesadillas. Most markets carry some brand of chipotle ranch, (Marie's, Wishbone, Farmhouse, Hidden Valley, Walden Farms, to name a few), but if your store does not, you can either use plain ranch dressing or make your own by adding diced chipotle peppers or chipotle powder to the ranch dressing. If we make our own, we like to use Bolthouse Farms Classic Ranch as our base. We really like their yogurt-based dressings ... super creamy, tasty and lower fat than most. Oh, and don't forget the guacamole. In my book, it's a

must with Mexican food!

You can get most of the ingredients for this dish ready a day or two ahead of time. Marinate the chicken thighs for one to two hours before grilling them. Once they are cooked, cut them up and store them in the refrigerator until you're ready to assemble the filling. Grill the peppers and onions when you grill the chicken and you can also cut up the fresh peppers well ahead of time. Just before you are ready to serve dinner, heat up the skillet and make the quesadillas. We like to make them on cast iron skillets on the burner, but you could also make them on a griddle, or a baking sheet in the oven, or even on cast iron on the barbecue. Since the weather is finally getting nicer, it's fun to do your cooking outdoors!



INGREDIENTS

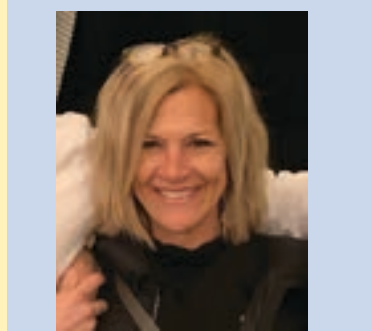
- (Serves 4)
- 4 boneless, skinless chicken thighs
 - 1 recipe marinade (below)
 - 8 flour tortillas
 - 1 red onion, cut into 8 wedges
 - 2 poblano peppers, seeded and stem removed
 - 2 jalapeño peppers, seeded and stem removed
 - 2 Ortega chilies, seeded and stem removed
 - 1 1/2 cup grated mixed Mexican cheese
 - 3/4 cup Chipotle Ranch dressing (split - 1/2 cup for filling, 1/4 cup for garnish)

Marinade:

- 2 oz. tequila
- 2 oz. fresh squeezed lime juice
- 2 tbsp. of your favorite hot sauce
- 2 tbsp. of your favorite salsa
- 1/2 tsp. chili lime seasoning (optional)

DIRECTIONS

Mix up the marinade and pour over chicken about one to two hours ahead of grilling. Preheat the grill to medium-high. Meanwhile prepare the peppers. Cut off the stem and cut the peppers in half lengthwise. Remove seeds and pith. Leave two halves of each kind of pepper intact, and finely dice the remaining peppers. Preheat the grill to medium-high heat. (Every grill is slightly different, so you may have to adjust cooking times and temps.) Place the pepper halves (cut side up) and the red onion wedges in an aluminum tray or on heavy duty foil, and drizzle with a little bit of olive oil. Sprinkle lemon pepper, (or just salt and pepper) over the tops. Place the veggies on the upper rack and grill for about 15-20 minutes, or until blistered and slightly blackened, but not charred. Cook the chicken for 5 minutes per side right on the grill, or until cooked through. Remove everything from the grill and cool enough to handle. Once, cooled, dice the chicken, peppers and onions and place into a mixing bowl. Add raw veggies and 1/2 cup of the dressing. Mix well. Preheat 2 cast iron skillets or a griddle over medium heat on the stove (can use regular frying pans, too), and brush with olive oil. Working in batches, place the bottom tortillas on the skillet and sprinkle enough cheese to lightly cover the tortilla. Cook over medium heat until cheese is beginning to melt. Spoon 1/4 of the filling mixture over the melted cheese. Sprinkle more cheese on top and place the top tortilla over the cheese. Continue to cook for another minute or two before flipping the quesadilla to brown the other side. Once the cheese is good and melted and the tortillas are golden-brown, remove from skillet and start the next batch. If you want to keep them warm, place the finished quesadillas on a baking sheet in the oven, on low, to keep warm until all of the quesadillas are done. Serve with guacamole, salsa and extra chipotle ranch. Garnish with fresh cilantro sprigs.



Susie can be reached at suziventosch@gmail.com. This recipe can be found on our website: www.lamorindaweekly.com If you would like to share your favorite recipe with Susie please contact her by email or call our office at (925) 377-0977. Or visit <https://treksandbites.com>

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Cal Shakes announces lineup for 'At the Bruns'

Submitted by Kevin Kopjak

California Shakespeare Theater (Cal Shakes) recently announced the lineup of programming for "At the Bruns," a new series showcasing music, comedy and theater, as well as a season opening picnic. Presented by Cal Shakes, "At the Bruns" is produced by outside community arts and culture organizations performing at the Bruns Memorial Amphitheater May through October 2023.

"We're excited to bring this new summer performing arts series to our families, friends, and neighbors" says -

Clive Worsley, Executive Director of Cal Shakes. "At the Bruns' is an extension, not a replacement, of our Shakespearean roots. This year we'll have great music on the mainstage, a site-integrated theater production, stand-up comedy, classical music and more. It's an exciting lineup that is guaranteed to be a fun time. We hope you'll join us back in the eucalyptus groves."

Doors will open May 28 at 1 p.m. for the Season Opening Picnic, which will feature an afternoon of music featuring musical guest Brightshine - a California-based quartet that redefines improvisational rock by focusing on strong

songs and arrangements, creating an irresistible style that is syncretic, ethereal and rocking - as well as food, drinks and, reconnecting with each other, and the turkeys in the Sesta Hills. The first performance begins at 2 p.m., followed by a 4 p.m. performance. Some of the other organizations planning on joining the celebration include Cancer Support Community, The Mosaic Project, We Players, Young People's Symphony Orchestra, and Cal Shakes Conservatory Instructors. Face painting and balloon critters will also be available. There will be food and drink available at the café.

Tickets are free, but reservations are required go to <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1nojXtCLC3Z-TbzGEeUYoL3xDcoT7y1qODILPAxyXhhw> to reserve your spot. For more information about additional shows, visit <https://calshakes.org/atthebruns/>