

## RECIPES

### Interior Mexico-style Enchilada Sauce

I call this recipe Interior Mexico-style Enchiladas sauce, because it is typical of the red chile enchiladas served in Mexico's interior. There, instead of using a lot of broth and then thickening the sauce with a roux of flour and butter or oil, the sauce is reduced until it thickens naturally. That technique makes less sauce, but the way enchiladas are often made in Mexico does not require as much of it. (See [INTERIOR MEXICO-STYLE ENCHILADAS](#)).

#### Ingredients

3 medium-sized *ancho* chiles, stems and seeds removed  
3 large *guajillo* chiles, stems and seeds removed  
3 1/2 cups very hot tap water  
3/4 teaspoon whole cumin (or substitute ground)  
4 large cloves garlic, peeled  
1 1/2 teaspoons dried leaf oregano  
3 tablespoons olive oil  
1 1/2 teaspoons vinegar  
3 bay leaves  
3/4 teaspoon salt, or to taste



#### Directions

- 1. Toast and rehydrate the chiles.** Heat a skillet over medium heat and, using the bottom of a spatula, press the chiles into the hot pan until they begin to become fragrant, about 15 – 20 seconds. Turn the chiles and toast the other sides. Be careful not to allow the chiles to burn or the dish will have a bitter taste. Place the chiles in the bowl of a blender, cover them with the hot water, and allow them to rehydrate for 20 minutes.
- 2. Toast and grind the cumin.** In the same skillet you used to toast the chiles, toast the cumin until it becomes fragrant, but do not allow it to scorch. Grind the cumin to a powder in a coffee or spice grinder or in a *molcajete* or mortar and pestle.
- 3. Puree the chiles and other sauce ingredients.** Strain off and reserve the chile's soaking liquid, leaving the chiles in the blender. Pour 1 1/2 cups of the soaking liquid back into the blender, add the toasted ground cumin, the garlic, and oregano. Blend the chiles for 1 – 2 minutes or until they are thoroughly pureed. Add another 1 1/2 cups soaking liquid and blend to mix thoroughly. At this point, unless you have a Vita Mix or similar quality blender, you may need to put the sauce through a strainer or food mill to remove any bits of chile skins or seeds.

**4. Reduce and thicken the sauce.** Heat a large saucepan over medium-low heat, add the olive oil, and then immediately add the chile puree, vinegar and bay leaves. (If you put the puree into very hot oil the sauce will splatter, making your kitchen resemble a violent crime scene). Raise the heat to medium to medium-high, bring the sauce to a simmer, and cook until it is thick enough to hold its shape when poured over the enchiladas, about as thick as a thin milkshake. This usually takes between 20 - 30 minutes.