

FOUR SHADES OF GREEN



Four Shades of Green

Modern takes on Doña Bertha's legendary creamy jalapeño sauce

Recipes & culinary history by Jane A. Thomas Health & Wellness



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Regional Inspiration: Vera Cruz” or “Cultural Roots of Green Sauce

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From Veracruz to Your Kitchen: A Sauce with a Story



On Mexico's Gulf Coast, in the vibrant port city of Veracruz, Doña Bertha Gonzales tended a small taco stand whose creamy jalapeño sauce drew lines down the block. She simmered green chiles, onion, and garlic until mellow, then whipped them with oil into a silky emulsion that clung to everything it touched. The recipe — simple in method, rich in character — spread beyond her stall, traveling north into Tex-Mex kitchens and inspiring countless variations.

The map you see marks Veracruz, the birthplace of that sauce, a city shaped by centuries of trade, migration, and culinary exchange. These four modern sauces reflect the vibrant ancestry of Veracruz flavor.

- ↪ Salsa Doña Cremosa con Aceite (Doña's Creamy Sauce with Oil) — classic oil-based, rich and silky.
- ↪ Salsa de Jalapeño Cocida sin Aceite (Cooked Jalapeño Sauce without Oil) — clean, punchy, oil-free, and **Phase 1-approved** for those following the SHAPE ReClaimed nutrition protocol.
- ↪ Salsa de Aguacate y Jalapeño (Avocado and Jalapeño Sauce) — lush, creamy, oil-free with avocado.
- ↪ Salsa Doña Ahumada (Doña's Smoked Sauce) — roasted chile depth with subtle smoke.

Each holds the heart of the original, ready to meet grilled meats, roasted vegetables, eggs, burritos, bowls, taco salads, nachos, and more.

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1. Salsa Doña Cremosa con Aceite (Classic, rich, silky – with oil)

Inspired by Doña Bertha's Veracruz food stall, where gently simmered jalapeños were blended with oil to create a smooth, green emulsion.

How to make it

- ✍ Simmer 6 whole jalapeños (stems removed; seed and/or devein some or all for less heat) with 1 coarse-chopped red onion until tender and dull green.
- ✍ Add 4 garlic cloves and 1 tsp salt in the last 2 minutes.
- ✍ Strain, reserving some hot water.
- ✍ Blend vegetables hot with ½ cup avocado oil until completely smooth, loosening with reserved liquid as needed.

Serve with: Grilled meats, roasted vegetables, eggs any style, burritos, taco salads, breakfast potatoes, grain bowls, or — in Mexico — famously with tacos al pastor, a spit-roasted marinated pork with Lebanese roots.

2. Salsa de Jalapeño Cocida sin Aceite (Without Oil or Avocado)

Oil-free, clean, punchy — Phase 1-approved for SHAPE ReClaimed

A leaner descendant where vegetables (pectin) do the thickening.

How to make it

- ✍ Simmer jalapeños (seed/devein as desired), onion, and garlic as above.
- ✍ Season with salt.
- ✍ Blend hot with a splash of reserved cooking liquid until velvety.

Serve with: Eggs, bean tostadas, burritos, taco salads, roasted chicken, vegetable soups, grilled seafood. Add lime or fresh herbs for brightness. (Phase 1-approved for SHAPE ReClaimed)

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3. Salsa de Aguacate y Jalapeño (Avocado-creamy, oil-free)

A modern verde where ripe avocado brings body without oil.

How to make it

- ↪ Cook jalapeños (seed/devein as preferred), onion, and garlic as in base recipe.
- ↪ Blend hot with 1 ripe avocado, salt, and a generous squeeze of lime.
- ↪ Thin with reserved cooking liquid.

Serve with: Seafood tacos, breakfast eggs, burritos, taco salads, veggie wraps, grilled corn, or chilled grain salads. Fresh oregano or epazote add complexity.

4. Salsa Doña Ahumada (Smoky, rich, versatile)

Inspired by the smoky taste of street-grilled food.

How to make it

- ↪ Char whole jalapeños (seed/devein for less heat), quartered red onion, and unpeeled garlic cloves over an open flame, grill, or dry skillet until blistered and aromatic.
- ↪ Peel garlic, combine all vegetables in blender with 1 tsp salt and ½ cup avocado oil (or 1 avocado for an oil-free smoky crema).
- ↪ Blend until smooth, adding a splash of hot water if needed.
- ↪ Serve with: Grilled meats, smoky beans, roasted sweet potatoes, breakfast scrambles, quesadillas, or as a smoky drizzle over salads and grain bowls.



If your blender's still clean, you haven't lived. Go make a mess.

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