

RECIPES

New Mexico Green Chile Enchilada Sauce

This recipe, which makes the best green chile enchilada sauce I have ever tried, was developed by Katy Meek, who founded the famous restaurant La Posta in Mesilla New Mexico in about 1939. I was fortunate to interview Katy for *La cocina de la frontera: Mexican-American Cooking from the Southwest* before her death.

Ingredient and preparation explanations

The sauce is best if made with New Mexico's incomparable Hatch chiles, now available frozen on the internet and in many out-of-state grocery stores in the fall. If you cannot find them, a combination of poblano or Anaheim chiles and a small amount of habanero chile pepper to provide the extra heat makes a reasonable substitute. For that option, remove the seeds and veins from ½ habanero chile, chop it into small pieces and blend it with the 1 ½ cups water that go into the sauce, and use roasted *poblano* chiles in place of the Hatch chiles. (Of course, for a milder version you can leave out the habanero). Unfortunately, all the canned green chiles I have tried just do not taste good. So, (unless you buy already roasted Hatch chiles and can avoid that process), you will need to roast and peel the fresh Hatch, poblano, or Anaheim chiles. That is actually quite easy and can be done either by holding them over a gas flame with insulated tongs, or placing them very close under an oven broiler until the skins char. I often use a toaster oven with the toast setting. They can also be deep fried until the skins become white and opaque, a technique often used in restaurants. (If you choose this method, try making French fries in the same oil you used for the chiles, and they will have a wonderful bite of heat added to them). Once the skins are well charred or blistered, place the chiles in a plastic bag to sweat for about 20 minutes then peel, stem, and seed them. Other than peeling the chiles, the recipe could not be easier, and they can be peeled well ahead of the final preparation.

To make the roux, you do not need to brown it as when making the red chile sauces; just mix the oil and flour together in a microwave dish and microwave on high for 40 seconds, allow it to cool for about 15 seconds then microwave again for 30 seconds.

Please note that I made a few minor changes to Katy's recipe. The original does not use either the small amount of olive oil or the flour.

Ingredients

2 teaspoons extra virgin olive oil

2 cloves garlic, minced

1 ½ cups Hatch, (or substitute poblano or Anaheim chiles plus ½ habanero chile as described above) peeled, seeded and chopped

1 cup white onion, chopped

½ cup tomato, chopped

½ teaspoon salt

1 ½ cups water

Roux made with 1 teaspoon olive oil and 1 teaspoon all-purpose flour

Directions

Heat a saucepan over medium heat, add the oil and garlic and cook just until the garlic has softened, but do not allow it to brown, about 30 seconds. Add the remaining ingredients, except the roux, and simmer for 10 – 20 minutes or until most, but not all, of the liquid has evaporated. Add the roux and continue to simmer until the sauce is bound together and no longer watery.

Makes enough for 4 servings of enchiladas.