

Don's Fajitas de Verano

Fajitas de Verano simply means summer fajitas. The history of fajitas dates back to the 1930's and 40's. It's the original TexMex cowboy food. Ranch workers made fajitas from the cheapest cuts of meat which were grilled with whatever was available, and wrapped in a tortilla. Today, folks wrap almost any meat or vegetable in their fajitas.

This time of year we have lots of fajita options from the summer harvest. Tonight we'll fold in summer squash, sweet peppers, onions and fennel. Chicken, or Chik'n Strips, will stand in for the beef. They're served with homemade salsa and guacamole. Wahoo!

Preparation Time: 35 minutes - Serves: 2

Organize Your Ingredients!

Notes on Organizing

Prep and organize ingredients on plates or in bowls so they are easy to add. When making fajitas, much of the prep goes directly to the table so diners can assemble their own fajitas. You'll prep 3 cloves of chopped garlic: 1 for the salsa, 1 for the guacamole and 1 for the fajitas. There are also 2 preps for the onion: 1/2 C. chopped onion for the salsa and 1 C. sliced onion for the fajitas.

Quick, Low-sodium Tomato Salsa

1 clove garlic (smashed and chopped)
1 Anaheim pepper (seeded and quartered)
1/2 of a Jalapeno pepper (seeded and finely chopped)
1/4 C. fresh cilantro (chopped)
1/2 C. yellow onion (chopped)
juice from 1 lime (2-1/2 T. lime juice)
1/4 tsp. salt
one 15 oz. can no-salt tomatoes

Plant-based Choice or Chicken Option

Plant-based Choice:

1 tsp. olive oil
20 Plant-based Chik'n Strips
1/4 C. white wine

- or -

Chicken Option:

1 tsp. olive oil
1 boneless skinless chicken breast
1/2 C. white wine

Fruit Finish

2 kiwis (halved)

Guacamole

1 clove garlic (smashed and chopped)
1/2 Jalapeno pepper (finely-chopped)
1/4 C. cilantro leaves (finely-chopped)
2 ripe avocados (peeled and sliced)
juice from 1 lime
Optional: 1/4 tsp. ground cumin

Seared Vegetables: Fajitas

2 tsp. olive oil
1 medium summer squash (quartered lengthwise)
1 clove garlic (smashed and chopped)
1/2 tsp. chili powder
1 T. lemon juice

1 C. medium yellow onion (sliced 1/8" thick)
2/3 C. fresh fennel bulb (sliced 1/8" thick)
2/3 C. green bell pepper (seeded, cut into strips)
2/3 C. red bell pepper (seeded, cut into strips)

four 6" whole-wheat flour tortillas

Additional filling items:

3 large red-leaf lettuce leaves (washed, rolled together and sliced)
1/4 C. grated, extra-sharp cheddar cheese
1/4 C. plain nonfat yogurt

Let's Prepare, Cook, and Plate This!

Basic Assembly Instructions

Make the salsa and guacamole first. They'll hold nicely while you prepare the rest of the meal.

Quick, Low-sodium Tomato Salsa and Guacamole

Quick, Low-Sodium Tomato Salsa:

Chop everything but the diced tomatoes in a food processor. Add the tomatoes and pulse a few times to mix well. (Or place all ingredients in a bowl with diced tomatoes and mix well.)

Guacamole:

Combine all ingredients by mashing with a fork in a medium-sized bowl. Stir well, cover and set aside.

Plant-based Choice:

Plant-based Choice or Chicken Option

1. Brown Chick'n strips in olive oil over medium-high heat. Add 1/4 C. white wine, cover and cook until wine disappears.
2. When cool enough to handle, slice in half lengthwise.

- or -

Chicken Option:

3. Coat sauté pan with measured olive oil. Sauté chicken on medium-high heat until both sides are golden brown.
4. Add 1/2 C. white wine, cover and cook 5 minutes per side. Remove from heat and allow to cool. When cool enough to handle, thin slice.

Fajitas

1. Heat oil in a sauté pan until it begins to shimmer. Lay summer squash slices in hot oil and brown on both flat sides. Sprinkle with chopped garlic, chili powder and lemon juice. Toss until juice cooks away. Remove from pan, allow to cool, then chop.
2. Using the same pan, sear onions, fennel and peppers until they begin to get dark brown around the edges. Remove from pan and transfer to a plate.
3. Warm tortillas in microwave by sprinkling each with water and stacking tortillas between two serving plates. Microwave 40 seconds. (If you don't have a microwave, warm them individually in a 9" non-stick pan on the stovetop.)
4. Arrange all ingredients (including chopped lettuce, shredded cheese and yogurt) on separate plates or in bowls on the countertop or table. Allow diners to assemble their own fajitas. Serve halved kiwis as a side.

What I've Learned from this Recipe

Searing the vegetables in this manner offers a firmer vegetable with a little caramelization reminiscent of old-world cooking around a campfire. It works particularly well with the flavors and textures of fajitas.

Let us know what you think, and ask any questions you may have! chezdon@plate6.com