

# Azteca Soup

Serves 1 | Active Time: 1 hour | Total Time: 1 hour 30 minutes

*Swick*

## Chef's Notes

### (1) CHILIES:

Ancho Chilies are dried, poblano chilies. They have a somewhat sweet, almost raisin-like taste which have medium heat. For added heat you can leave in the seeds.

Guajillo chilies are thick, leathery, dark/reddish-brown chilies. Because of their thicker skin, they generally need to be soaked a bit longer. Guajillo peppers have a mild to moderate amount of heat.

These chilies are available in most Latino or Mexican markets. They can also be ordered online. For less heat use only one guajillo chili.

When working with chilies, it's best to wear rubber gloves so your skin doesn't get irritated.

(2) CREOLE SEASONING MIX: This spice mix will keep for months in a sealed container. It's nice on grilled fish, chicken, meats and vegetables.

2 1/2 tsp. smoked paprika  
2 tbsp. salt  
2 tbsp. garlic powder  
1 tbsp. black pepper  
1 tbsp. cayenne pepper  
1 tbsp. dried oregano  
1/4 tsp. ground cumin  
1/8 tsp. ground coriander

In a small bowl, combine the spices and mix together.

(3) CORN TORTILLAS: In a pinch, you can use store-bought corn tortilla chips. The end result will not be the same though, as the fresh, crushed chips add really nice texture to the soup. They also add a more authentic taste to the soup.

## Step 1: Soaking the Chilies

- 2 large, dried guajillo chilies (about 1 oz) Remove seeds and stems from chilies.(1) Place the chilies into a bowl and cover with hot water. Let soak for about 20 minutes.
- 2 large, dried ancho chilies (about 1 oz) For added flavor and smokiness, toast the chilies before soaking. To do this, heat a dry cast iron pan to medium-high heat. Once hot place a few chilies in the pan and toast for a minute or two. As they cook press them into the pan, using tongs. Then proceed with de-stemming and soaking.

Meanwhile, place the oven rack to 2 to 3 inches below the broiler of your oven. Then preheat the broiler, while you move onto the next step.

## Step 2: Roasting the Vegetables

- 1/2 white onion
- 1 lb ripe tomatoes (preferably plum)
- 6 cloves garlic

To roast the vegetables, place them into a dry, cast-iron skillet or any other heavy-bottomed, oven-proof fry pan. Place under the broiler and let cook until they start to char a bit. Using tongs, turn occasionally until all sides are lightly charred, about 20 to 30 minutes.

Once done, remove from the oven and let cool slightly. Just be sure to place an oven mitt on the handle of the pan so you don't forget and burn yourself.

## Step 3: Pureeing the Chilies and Vegetables

Drain the chilies (discard liquid) and place into a blender. Add the cooled, roasted vegetables and purée until smooth.

## Step 4: Cooking the Soup

- 8 cups chicken stock

Using a large, heavy-bottomed pot, add the stock and chili purée. Stir over medium-low heat and bring to a simmer. Cook for 45 minutes to an hour over medium to medium-low heat.

Meanwhile, fry the tortillas.

## Step 5: Frying the Corn Tortillas

- 1 to 2 cups peanut or vegetable oil (for deep-frying)
- 10 to 12 white corn tortillas (5 to 6 inches)

Using a heavy-bottomed pot or pan, add enough oil to fill the bottom by about 1 to 2 inches. Turn the heat to medium and let heat to 375° degrees Fahrenheit.

Meanwhile, cut half of the tortillas into thin strips, about 1/4" -inch wide. Set aside.

Cut the remaining tortillas into quarters and fry in a few batches. Cook for about 1 minute, turning occasionally, until light-golden and crispy.

Remove the quartered tortillas from the oil using a slotted spoon or tongs. Place onto paper towels and let drain. Once cool, place the quartered and fried tortillas into a plastic bag and crush them with your hands or use a rolling pin. Add the crushed chips to the soup.

For the tortilla strips, also fry them in batches and drain on paper towels. For added flavor, season the strips with creole seasoning (2) while they are still hot. (3) Set aside to garnish the soup later.

## Step 6: Adding the Chicken

- 2 cups cooked chicken (either 2 breasts, or 1/2 roasted chicken)

Shred the chicken into pieces and add to the soup. The chicken is optional, but it adds nice texture and makes the soup more like a meal.

## Step 7: Adding the Corn

- 2 to 3 ears fresh white corn (or 1 1/2 cups frozen) Remove the corn from the ear and add to soup. Frozen or canned corn can easily be substituted, but fresh corn just adds that extra touch.

## Step 8: Making the Salsa

- 1/2 white onion (about 3/4 cup) To make the salsa, finely dice the onions and add to a bowl. Then finely mince the
- 1 to 2 serrano peppers (or jalapeno) serrano peppers, using gloves. (1)
- 1/4 cup fresh cilantro Roughly chop the cilantro and add to the onion and serrano mixture. Squeeze the
- 1 to 2 tbsp fresh lime juice lime into the salsa and add the seasonings. Mix to combine and set aside.
- 1 tsp kosher salt (to taste)
- 1/2 tsp freshly ground black pepper Dice the tomato into 1/2" -inch cubes, place into a bowl and set aside.
- 2 ripe tomatoes Cut the whole lime into fancy citrus wedges and set aside.
- 1 fresh lime

## Step 9: Finishing the Soup

- kosher salt (to taste) To finish the soup, check for seasoning and adjust as needed.
- freshly ground black pepper (to taste) Set yourself up for serving the soup. Place the tortilla strips into a bowl. Gather the tomatoes and salsa and set aside.

## Step 10: Cutting the Avocados

- 2 ripe avocados Just before you are ready to serve, cut the avocados and add a few tablespoons to
  - 1 cup fresh Mexican crema (crème each serving bowl (or you can add the avocado directly to the salsa; just mix fraîche) gently to combine).
- To serve the soup, place a few tablespoons of tomato into each bowl, along with a tablespoon of the onion salsa. Top with a small handful of tortilla strips (or you can place them on last as a garnish).
- Ladle in some soup and top with Mexican crema. Serve each bowl with a wedge of lime, to squeeze in and enjoy!