



Spicy Mexican Shredded Pork Tostadas (Tinga)

WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS

We wanted our pork tostadas recipe to have the crisp texture and smoky tomato flavor characteristic of traditional Mexican shredded pork. To get smoky, fork-tender pork on the stovetop, we simmered cubed Boston butt in water flavored with garlic, onion, and thyme, then sautéed the drained meat in a hot frying pan to make it crisp. Finally, we used canned tomato sauce and chipotle chile powder to build a deep and complex sauce for our shredded pork tostada recipe.



INGREDIENTS

Tinga

- 2 pounds boneless pork butt, trimmed of excess fat and cut into 1-inch pieces (see note)
- 2 medium onions, 1 quartered and 1 chopped fine
- 5 medium garlic cloves, 3 peeled and smashed and 2 minced or pressed through garlic press (about 2 teaspoons)
- 4 sprigs fresh thyme
- table salt
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- ½ teaspoon dried oregano
- 1 (14.5-ounce) can tomato sauce
- 1 tablespoon ground chipotle powder (see note)
- 2 bay leaves

Tostadas

- ¾ cup vegetable oil

INSTRUCTIONS

SERVES 4 TO 6

The trimmed pork should weigh about 1 1/2 pounds. Tinga is traditionally served on tostadas (crisp fried corn tortillas), but you can also use the meat in tacos and burritos or simply served over rice. Make sure to buy tortillas made only with corn, lime, and salt—preservatives will compromise quality. For tips on baking tostadas, see [How to Bake Tostadas](#) (related). Our winning brand of ready-made tostadas, Mission, is also an excellent choice. We prefer the complex flavor of chipotle powder, but two minced canned chipotle chiles can be used in its place. The pork can be prepared through step 1 and refrigerated in an airtight container for 2 days. The tostadas can be made up to a day in advance and stored in an airtight container.

1. FOR THE TINGA: Bring pork, quartered onion, smashed garlic cloves, thyme, 1 teaspoon salt, and 6 cups water to simmer in large saucepan over medium-high heat, skimming off any foam that rises to surface. Reduce heat to medium-low, partially cover, and cook until pork is tender, 75 to 90 minutes. Drain pork, reserving 1 cup cooking liquid. Discard onion, garlic, and thyme. Return pork to saucepan and, using potato masher, mash until shredded into rough 1/2-inch pieces (see Step-by-Step below); set aside.

2. Heat olive oil in 12-inch nonstick skillet over medium-high heat until shimmering. Add shredded pork, chopped onion, and oregano; cook, stirring often, until pork is well browned and crisp, 7 to 10 minutes. Add minced garlic and cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds.

- 12** (6-inch) corn tortillas (see note)
table salt

Garnishes

- queso fresco or feta cheese
fresh cilantro leaves
sour cream
Diced avocado
Lime wedges

3. Stir in tomato sauce, chipotle powder, reserved pork cooking liquid, and bay leaves; simmer until almost all liquid has evaporated, 5 to 7 minutes. Remove and discard bay leaves and season with salt to taste.

4. TO FRY TOSTADAS: Heat vegetable oil in 8-inch heavy-bottomed skillet over medium heat to 350 degrees. Using fork, poke center of each tortilla 3 or 4 times (to prevent puffing and allow for even cooking). Fry 1 at a time, holding metal potato masher in upright position on top of tortilla to keep it submerged (see photo below), until crisp and lightly browned, 45 to 60 seconds (no flipping is necessary). Drain on paper towel-lined plate and season with salt to taste. Repeat with remaining tortillas.

5. TO SERVE: Spoon small amount of shredded pork onto center of each tostada and serve, passing garnishes separately.

Step-by-Step

Crisp-Tender Mexican Shredded Pork



1. SIMMER AND DRAIN

Simmer pork with aromatics to infuse with vegetal flavors. Drain, reserving 1 cup of liquid.



2. SHRED

Mash pork with potato masher to maximize surface area for browning.



3. SAUTÉ AND BRAISE

Cook pork with onions and oregano until exterior is deeply brown and crisp, then simmer in sauce.

Technique

Weighing Down Tostadas



MULTITASKING MASHER

A potato masher makes frying tostadas a breeze. Stood upright, it keeps the tortilla fully submerged in the hot oil, eliminating the need for flipping.