

Tortas

You can assemble these while everyone is watching — it can be great theater for a party — or invite people to make their own. Substitute roasted chicken or turkey for the meat filling, and warm the rolls if you like.

INGREDIENTS:

- 1½ cups refried black beans
- 6 bolillos, or crusty French or Italian rolls, or 3-inch sour-dough dinner rolls, split, with some of the center pulled out
- Meat filling (see recipes)
- 1 red onion, sliced, placed in sieve and rinsed in cold water or marinated (see Note)
- 6 ounces thinly sliced queso fresco or Monterey Jack cheese
- 4 cups shredded romaine
- 2 ripe avocados, mashed with ½ teaspoon salt and ½ tablespoon lemon juice
- ½ cup sliced pickled jalapenos (optional)

INSTRUCTIONS: Heat beans. Place top and bottom of rolls side by side. In the hollow of one half roll, spread a thin layer of beans. Layer on steak slices

Grilled Chipotle Flank Steak

This is a filling I use frequently because it is fast and good. The slices of steak go well with the torta ingredients: mashed beans, slices of Monterey Jack cheese or queso fresco, slices of mild onion and mashed avocado.

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 teaspoon salt
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 flank steak (about 1¾ pounds)
- Juice of 2 limes
- 2 tablespoons canned chipotle adobo sauce

INSTRUCTIONS: Smash together salt and garlic. Slash steak across the grain in 3 places about ½-inch deep on both sides. Combine lime juice with salt-garlic mixture and adobo

or about 2 tablespoons of the chilorio filling. Press onions on top of meat. Add a layer of cheese and lettuce.

On remaining half of roll, spread a layer of avocado. Top with pickled jalapenos, if desired. Press halves together.

Makes 6 tortas

Note: To marinate onions, heat 1 cup apple cider vinegar, 1 cup water and 1 tablespoon sugar in microwave until very hot. Add ½ teaspoon salt and 2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar. Pour over a red onion that has been thinly sliced and separated into rings. Marinate for 30 minutes, then drain. Leftovers keep in a jar in the refrigerator for a week for more sandwiches.

PER SERVING (with flank steak): 590 calories, 43 g protein, 35 g carbohydrate, 31 g fat (12 g saturated), 93 mg cholesterol, 995 mg sodium, 8 g fiber.

sauce. Rub into slashes and all over steak. Place in a sealable bag. Marinate 30-60 minutes at room temperature.

Preheat a gas or charcoal grill. Cook steak for 15-18 minutes or until desired doneness, turning once. Let steak rest for 10 minutes. Thinly slice across the grain.

Serves 6 for tortas

PER SERVING: 215 calories, 29 g protein, 1 g carbohydrate, 10 g fat (5 g saturated), 68 mg cholesterol, 272 mg sodium, 0 fiber.



KENDRA LUCK / The Chronicle

Hass avocados are a particularly good choice for tortas because of their rich, nutty flavor and buttery texture.

Chilorio Filling for Tortas

This spicy pork is often seen in Mexican marketplaces already prepared and ready for burritos, tacos and tortas. Because of the ancho chiles and vinegar, chilorio can be kept for days in the refrigerator and even improves in flavor. Any leftover sauce freezes well.

INGREDIENTS:

- 3 pounds boneless pork butt
- 5 dried ancho chiles, stems removed, cut into pieces
- 4 garlic cloves
- 1 whole chipotle in adobo sauce, stem removed
- ½ teaspoon cumin seeds
- ½ teaspoon oregano + more to taste
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt + more to taste
- ¼ cup apple cider vinegar
- Freshly ground pepper to taste

INSTRUCTIONS: Cut meat into 2-inch pieces, leaving some fat but cutting away any huge pieces of fat. Place meat chunks in heavy-bottomed pot. Cover with 1 quart cold water. Bring to a simmer over medium heat, skimming off foam. Do not cover pot.

While the meat is simmering, place ancho chile pieces in a heatproof bowl and cover with very hot water. Leave for at least 20 minutes.

Use tongs to place the soaked chiles in a blender jar along with the garlic, chipotle chile, cumin seed, ½ teaspoon

oregano, 1 teaspoon salt, vinegar and ¼ cup water. Puree to a smooth, thick paste. Set aside.

After 1 hour, liquid in pot should have almost evaporated and pork will be nearly tender. Season meat with black pepper, salt and oregano to taste and continue cooking. The melted fat (lard) from the pork will help begin the browning. Once meat just barely begins to brown, remove from heat. Place pork chunks on a cutting board and let cool for about 10 minutes. Pull apart into shreds with your fingers. (I prefer chunky shredding rather than the fine shreds popular in Mexico.)

If there are browned bits left in the pot, add ¼ cup water and bring to a simmer to help release them. Return the shredded pork and half of the ancho chile sauce to the pot. Mix the sauce into the meat and simmer a few minutes, adding more sauce as you like. This is a mild sauce.

Simmer at least 15 minutes over medium-low heat to help remove any raw taste of vinegar.

Serves 10-12

PER SERVING: 255 calories, 21 g protein, 3 g carbohydrate, 17 g fat (6 g saturated), 79 mg cholesterol, 188 mg sodium, 0 fiber