

Nopales Tempura Tacos

with Chipotle Vegetables & Cotija Cheese

Nopales are the edible, fleshy pads of the prickly pear cactus. They're harvested shortly after rains when they're plump, juicy and full of nutrients. Like most cacti, these pads have spines that need to be carefully removed and discarded. Follow this recipe and you'll be enjoying crispy, tempura-style nopales in no time.



Ingredients

- ¾ Pound Nopales
- 2 Cloves Garlic
- 2 Ounces Cotija Cheese
- 1 Bunch Cilantro
- 1 Carrot
- 1 Jalapeño Pepper
- 1 Lime
- 1 Red Onion
- 1 Cup Panko Breadcrumbs
- ¼ Cup Flour
- ¼ Teaspoon Chipotle Powder
- 1 Farm Egg
- 8 Corn Tortillas

Makes 2 Servings
About 650 Calories Per Serving



Instructions



Prepare the ingredients:

Set aside the nopales, then wash and dry the fresh produce. Peel and mince the garlic. Crumble the Cotija cheese. Pick the cilantro leaves off the stems; discard the stems. Peel and chop the carrot into thin matchsticks. Small dice the jalapeño, (for milder tacos, remove and discard the seeds and ribs before dicing). Cut the lime into quarters. Peel and thinly slice the red onion.



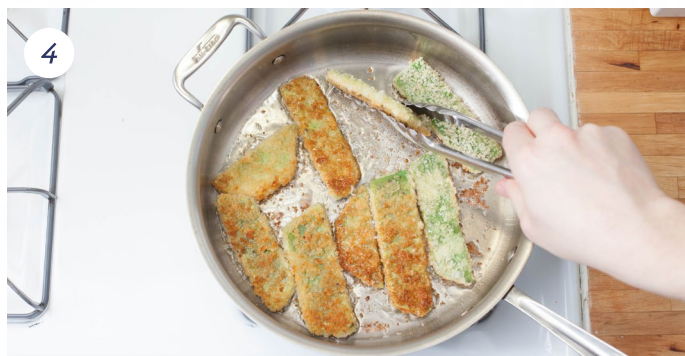
Prepare the nopales:

Using a large knife, carefully shave the spikes off the nopales. Then, trim off the tough outer edges of each nopal and rinse under cool water to wash away any remaining blemishes. Slice into ¼-inch-thick and 1-inch-wide pieces.



Coat the nopales:

In a medium bowl, combine the **sliced nopales** and **flour** and toss to thoroughly coat. Crack the **egg** into a second bowl, then whisk with **2 tablespoons of water** until slightly foamy. Place the **panko breadcrumbs** in a third bowl. Working one at a time, shake the excess flour off each nopal piece then coat with **egg wash** (letting the excess drip off), then completely dredge in panko and transfer to a clean plate. Repeat with the remaining nopal pieces.



Cook the nopales:

In a large pan, heat a ¼-inch layer of olive oil on medium-high until hot, but not smoking. (You can test the temperature of your oil by adding a few breadcrumbs to the pan. If they sizzle immediately, the oil is hot enough.) Working in batches, add the **coated nopal slices** to the hot oil. Cook 2 to 4 minutes per side, or until crispy and golden brown. Transfer to a paper towel-lined plate and season with salt.



Cook the vegetables:

In a separate, large pan, heat 2 teaspoons of olive oil on medium until hot. Add the **onion**, **carrot** and **jalapeño** and cook, stirring occasionally, 3 to 4 minutes, or until the vegetables have softened. Season with salt and pepper and add the **garlic** and as much of the **chipotle powder** as you'd like, depending on how spicy you'd like the vegetables to be. Cook, stirring frequently, for an additional 30 seconds to 1 minute, or until thoroughly combined and fragrant. Remove from heat and stir in the **juice of 2 lime wedges**. Transfer the mixture to a plate or bowl. Wipe out the pan.



Warm the tortillas & plate your dish:

In the same pan used to cook the vegetables, warm the **tortillas** on medium for 30 seconds to 1 minute per side, or until soft and pliable. Transfer the warmed tortillas to a plate and cover with a paper towel to keep warm. Stack 2 tortillas on top of each other and fill with 1/4 of both the **tempura fried nopales** and **vegetable mixture** to create one taco. Repeat with the remaining tortillas, nopales and vegetables. Divide the tacos between 2 plates. Top the tacos with the **Cotija cheese** and garnish with the **cilantro** and **remaining lime wedges**. Enjoy!