

Mexican Tortilla Chicken Soup – submitted by Suzanne Becker

In addition to avocados, I also put out sour cream for garnish. I almost always add Chipotle chiles - one or two minced otherwise it will be too spicy for most - (smoked chiles in a can - can be found at City Market) and instead of fresh tomatoes, I use canned roasted crushed tomatoes. Also I often mix chicken stock with mushroom broth. If you bake the tortilla strips in the oven, you avoid all that extra fat. Double recipe for 6 main meal bowls.

(makes 4 small bowls)

- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 medium white onions, diced
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 jalapenos, seeded and minced
- 3 ripe medium tomatoes, chopped
- 1 quart chicken stock, recipe follows
- Salt** and freshly **ground** black pepper
- Canola oil, for pan-frying
- 8 corn tortillas, cut into 1/8-inch-thick strips
- 1 1/2 cups shredded cooked chicken
- 2 avocados, halved, pitted, peeled, and diced
- 1 cup shredded cheddar cheese
- 1/2 cup coarsely chopped fresh cilantro leaves, for garnish
- 1 lime, cut in wedges, for serving

Directions

Place a stockpot over medium heat and coat with 2 tablespoons of the olive oil. Add the onions, garlic, jalapenos, and tomatoes; cook, stirring for 15 minutes until the vegetables are cooked down and pulpy. Pour in the stock, season with salt and pepper, and simmer for 20 minutes.

Meanwhile, heat 1-inch of canola oil in a skillet over medium-high flame. When the oil begins to smoke, add the tortilla strips in batches and fry until they are crisp on all sides. Remove to a paper towel-lined platter and sprinkle with salt while they are still hot.

Ladle the hot soup into 4 soup bowls and put a pile of shredded chicken on top of each. Top with the diced avocado and fried tortilla strips (and cheese if using). Garnish with cilantro and serve with lime wedges.