



STEWED MEXICALI CHICKEN

SERVINGS: 8 ACTIVE TIME: 30 mins TOTAL TIME: 90 mins

Bored of ground beef tacos with prepackaged taco mix? Me too! Meet my good pal Mexicali Stewed Chicken. While this recipe takes considerably longer to cook than your standard ground chuck, the payoff is beyond worth it. Plentiful tender meat infused to the core with cumin and pepper flavors is the reward for your patience. Turn your next burrito up to jonce! with this tasty recipe.

Ingredients

- > 2.5 lbs boneless, skinless chicken breast or thighs or mix
- > 1.5 cups braising liquid (see notes)
- > ¾ cup water
- > 1 tsp garlic powder
- > 1 tsp cumin
- > 2 tbsps red wine vinegar
- > Salt & Pepper to taste
- > Plenty of tortillas

Directions

Concerning what liquid to stew your chicken in, I offer two “semi-homemade,” options that will produce great results:

- One 12 fluid oz. bottle of Trader Joes “Enchilada Sauce,” or
- One 16 oz. bottle of mild Ortega “Taco Sauce,” or one 8 oz. bottle of mild and one 8 oz. bottle of hot
- If you have your own Mexican style sauce already up your sleeve, feel free to use a cup and a half of that. The other thing I would caution is to not start with anything too spicy as the flavors (and heat) will concentrate as the liquid reduces.

1. Start by trimming your chicken into strips, roughly three inches in length and one inch in width but don't go crazy. We're not making McNuggets here, you just want to basically break down the breasts into thirds or into quarters and the thighs either into halves or into thirds depending on how big they are. This step is so that they will cook and become tender relatively quickly but not so small that they will turn into complete mush when stewed.
2. Put a large sauté pan or skillet, that has a lid, over high heat and sear the chicken on one side in batches. Your goal is not to cook the chicken to doneness, but to get good color on one side and to begin building added flavor for your dish.

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Shopping List

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|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2.5 lbs boneless, skinless chicken breast or thighs or mix | <input type="checkbox"/> garlic powder |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A bottle of Ortega Taco Sauce or Trader Joes Enchilada Sauce | <input type="checkbox"/> cumin |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> red wine vinegar |

3. Once all of the chicken is seared, return all of the meat to the pan and deglaze with the red wine vinegar, scraping the bottom of the pan for any brown bits that may have formed. Then add the sauce to the pan. If using the recommended store bought sauce, I like to fill the bottles halfway with water (approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ cup), and mix it around to get all of the leftover sauce that is usually left in the bottle. Add the water to the pan along with the cumin and garlic powder and mix well to combine. Continue over high heat until the liquid begins to simmer.
4. Once the liquid is simmering, put a lid on the pan and reduce heat to low. Simmer for one hour.
5. After an hour has passed, stir the pot and let simmer uncovered for thirty more minutes, allowing the sauce to reduce and thicken.
6. When the 30 minutes have passed, turn off the heat. Using two forks, start pulling the chicken pieces apart. It should be tender enough to do so easily. You will notice that the sauce is beginning to thicken even more and become incorporated with the chicken while doing this, so don't worry if it seems like the sauce didn't reduce enough when you begin. Once the chicken is pulled apart, the dish is done and can be served immediately. If you feel like the sauce is still too thin, put the pan back on the heat and turn it up to no higher than medium and stir frequently. The chicken and sauce will burn very easily at this stage.



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