

Quesabirria Tacos

with consommé for dipping — Jalisco's gift to the griddle.

PREP 30 MIN • COOK 3–4 HRS • SERVES 6–8 • MODERATE

INGREDIENTS

For the Birria

- 1.5 kg beef chuck roast, cut into large chunks
- 500 g beef short ribs (bone-in)
- 5 dried guajillo chiles, stems & seeds removed
- 3 dried ancho chiles, stems & seeds removed
- 2 dried chiles de árbol (for heat)
- 4 roma tomatoes, halved
- 1 white onion, quartered
- 6 garlic cloves
- 1 tsp cumin seeds
- ½ tsp black peppercorns
- 2 whole cloves
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 2 bay leaves
- 2 tbsp apple cider vinegar
- 1 tsp dried Mexican oregano
- Salt to taste
- 2 tbsp neutral oil

For the Tacos

- 16–20 small corn tortillas
- 300 g Oaxacan cheese (quesillo), shredded
- or low-moisture mozzarella as a substitute

To Serve

- White onion, finely diced
- Fresh cilantro, chopped
- Lime wedges
- Salsa verde or tomatillo salsa

METHOD

1. Toast the chiles. In a dry skillet over medium heat, toast the guajillo, ancho and árbol chiles 30–45 seconds a side until fragrant and slightly puffed (don't let them burn). Cover with boiling water and soak 20 minutes until soft.
2. Char the aromatics. In the same dry skillet, char the tomatoes, onion and garlic until blackened in spots, 8–10 minutes — this builds the smoky depth of the consommé.
3. Build the adobo. Drain the chiles (reserve the liquid). Blend with the charred tomatoes, onion, garlic, cumin, peppercorns, cloves, cinnamon, oregano, vinegar and a splash of soaking liquid until smooth. Pass through a sieve for a silkier sauce.

4. Sear & braise. Season the beef well with salt. Sear in batches in hot oil in a Dutch oven until deep brown. Return all the meat, pour over the adobo and add water to just cover (about 1.5 L). Add bay leaves, bring to a boil, then cover and simmer low 3–3.5 hours until the meat collapses.
5. Shred & separate. Shred the meat coarsely. Strain the braising liquid — this is your consommé. Skim the rendered fat off the top and reserve it; that's what colours the tortillas.
6. Assemble & griddle. Heat a comal over medium-high. Dip each tortilla in the reserved fat until orange-red, lay on the comal, top one half with beef and a layer of cheese. Fold, press, and cook about 2 minutes a side until crisp and molten.
7. Serve immediately. Ladle warm consommé into cups alongside. Garnish with onion, cilantro and lime. The ritual is non-negotiable: dip, bite, repeat.

Tip · Reserve every drop of the skimmed chile-fat — dipping the tortillas in it before griddling is what makes a quesabirria, not just a birria taco.