

A Deprived Expat's Fish Taco Recipe

It's not easy being an expat, especially when you're deprived of fish tacos.

This post is mainly for any of my readers deprived of your favorite home foods, especially since you are living the 'good life' across the pond somewhere. Therefore, today's post is about fish tacos. Why? Because it's Cinco de Mayo of course. And because fish tacos rock!

We don't have access to fish tacos around these parts and when I first heard about them, the idea sort of turned me off. Yes, I like fish. In fact, I eat fish at least twice a week, but fish and tacos just didn't seem a likely combination. But then on a recent trip to California, I decided to try them. I was hooked from the first bite and took every chance I could to eat them.



As I was looking for recipes for our Cinco de Mayo celebration, the idea of a plate of fish tacos made my tongue jump for joy (again).

So, What is a Fish Taco?

It's simple math really. Fish + taco = Fish taco. Hee-hee, let's break it down even further.

Fish tacos were reborn in Baja, the second earth's second-longest peninsula off the Northwest coast of Mexico, but have been extremely popular in Southern California for many years.

Let's step back a bit and give credit where credit is due. Anthropological evidence shows that the indigenous people living in the lake region of the Valley of Mexico traditionally ate tacos filled with small fish. Praise for fish tacos, now onto the recipe. □

A Simple Fish Taco Recipe

You can make fish tacos (Tacos de Pescado) with a hearty white fish such as, salmon, cod, tilapia, or even with shrimp (Tacos de camarones). The taco filling generally consists of shredded cabbage, a sour cream or Greek yogurt-based dressing, and fresh cilantro. Interpret your own fish taco recipe as I have below.

Ingredients (Makes 4 medium-sized tacos)

- 1 pound (450 grams) salmon fillets (cod, tilapia, or shrimp)
- Flour
- Creole seasoning
- Sea salt and pepper
- Sunflower oil
- Cooked corn kernels (roasted adds an intense flavor)
- 1 cup Greek yogurt
- Fresh cilantro
- Fresh basil
- 1 lime
- Mexican oregano
- Chipotle (optional)
- Soft shell tacos
- 1/2 red or yellow pepper, thinly sliced
- Arugula

Fish Taco Yogurt Salsa

In a medium bowl, mix together Greek yogurt and 1/2 teaspoon each of ground Mexican oregano and fresh lime juice until the consistency is not too runny. Add sea salt and chipotle to taste.

Cooking Instructions

1. Heat a heavy pan over medium-high heat.
2. Season fish on meat side with Creole seasoning or salt

and pepper.

3. Lightly dust the fish with flour and shake off the excess.
4. Add a tablespoon of sunflower oil to the pan.
5. Cook fish pieces until lightly golden brown, break into chunks, and set on a paper towel.
6. Remove excess oil from pan and lightly fry the tortillas, they should still be soft to handle.

To serve, place fried fish pieces in a tortilla, add the healthy colorful toppings of your choice such as roasted corn, red pepper slices, fresh cilantro, fresh basil, yogurt sauce, and arugula. Celebrate Cinco de Mayo by cooking some healthy fish tacos served with a glass of refreshing [Aguas Frescas](#).

¡Buen provecho!

Mexican Wedding Cakes Recipe

I wonder when the holiday baking period officially ends. After Christmas or before New Year's Eve? Does it end on January 6th to celebrate Epiphany? In our home the holiday baking will continue for a while because baking and cooking actually relax me. I know, I'm weird like that.

The other day I had a sweet idea to invite the family over for dessert after our post-Christmas lunch at a local restaurant. To continue the holiday celebration I'm serving an international array of sweets. A French Gateau au Chocolat, an American apple pie, a plate of [German Spekulatius cookies](#), and last but not least, Mexican Wedding Cakes.

No, no one is getting married (at least not that I know of), but I want to celebrate a sweet Christmas with the family by serving Mexican Wedding Cakes in contrast to the multi-tiered conventional wedding cake.



Mexican Wedding Cake Cookies

History of Mexican Wedding Cakes

Mexican Wedding Cakes are actually bite-sized cookies traditionally served at special occasions such as weddings and christenings. The recipe calls for rich ingredients such as

butter and sugar which in years past was normally reserved for significant events.

In Mexico the sugar cookie became popular following Spanish colonization in the 16th century. Some food historians believe these types of cookies and cakes derive from Moorish traditions that spread through Europe and eventually reached the Americas.

Other historians say Mexican wedding cakes may have migrated to Mexico with European nuns, or may have been associated with cookies served beside Russian samovars (tea urns).

Somehow, someway the cookie recipe traveled far and wide.

One Cookie, One World

Across the world, the basic recipe includes butter, powdered sugar, flour, finely chopped nuts, and the best pure vanilla extract you can find. The shape varies from round and flat to crescent-shaped.

The cookie name on the other hand is quite diverse depending on the country. You'll find them called Russian Tea Cakes, Mandulás kifli (Hungary), Polvorones (Spain), Finska kakor (Finland), and Napoleonshatte (Danish) and the list of names go on.

Holiday celebrations will continue for a few weeks, so I won't end my holiday baking right away. The Mexican Wedding Cake cookies are easy to make and your guests will really love the powdery melt-in-your mouth cookie.

Mexican Wedding Cakes Recipe

*Butter and nuts and vanilla to spice,
melt in your mouth Mexican Wedding Cakes,
are heavenly nice!*



Mexican Wedding Cake Cookies

Cookie Ingredients (Makes about 50 cookies)

- 1 cup (105 grams) nuts (almonds, pecans, walnuts, or hazelnuts)
- 1 cup (227 grams) unsalted butter (high fat content European-style) cut into teaspoon sized cubes, room temperature
- 1/2 cup (30 grams) confectioners' (powdered or icing) sugar
- 2 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- 2 cups minus 2 tablespoons (255 grams) all-purpose flour
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon cinnamon

- 2 tablespoons flour (for grinding the nuts)

Sugar Dusting Ingredients

- 1 cup (120 grams) powdered (icing or confectioners) sugar, sifted



Mexican Wedding Cake cookie dough

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F (177 degrees C) and place rack in center of oven.
2. Place nuts on a baking sheet and bake until lightly brown, about 8 minutes. Allow the nuts to cool completely.
3. Place nuts and 2 tablespoons (25 grams) of flour into

your food processor. Pulsate until the nuts are finely ground (being careful not to form a paste).

4. In your stand mixer (hand or electric mixer), beat the butter and sugar until light and fluffy (about 3 minutes). Add the vanilla extract and baste. Add the remaining flour, salt, and cinnamon and beat until combined. Stir in the ground nuts.
5. Cover and refrigerate the dough until firm (about 60 minutes).
6. Line baking sheets with parchment paper.
7. Using a large melon baller, take the approximate amount of dough needed to form the chilled dough into balls about 1 inch (2.5 cm). Place them 2 inches (5 cm) apart on the prepared baking sheets.
8. Bake for about 8-11 minutes, or until the edges of the cookies just begin to turn light brown.



Mexican Wedding Cake cookies after baking

9. Remove the cookies from the oven and carefully place them on a wire rack to cool for about 5 minutes.
10. Place 1 cup (120 grams) of sifted confectioners' sugar on a flat plate or in a bowl. Work quickly and roll the hot cookies in the sugar, one at a time using a spoon or knife to cover them completely. Alternatively, you can sift confectioners' sugar directly onto the cookies.
11. Place the cookies on a wire rack to cool completely before storing (in an airtight container).

Before serving you may want to dust the cookies again using sifted confectioners' sugar.

Bon Appétit!

Celebrating Cinco de Mayo with Aguas Frescas

Cinco de Mayo (Fifth of May in Spanish) is a holiday celebrating Mexico's victory over France during the Battle of Puebla in 1862. On May 5th throughout cities and towns in Mexico and the United States, expect to find elaborate parades, street festivals, mariachi music performances celebrating Mexican culture and heritage. Whether you party at home, with friends, or join a street festival, food and drink are a large part of the cultural celebration.

Cinco de Mayo food is more than fast-food burritos, tacos, and tequila-laden drinks we associate with Mexican cuisine. In Mexico you'll find street vendors selling not only food, but drinks from large glass bottles called *aguas frescas* which

translates to 'fresh waters'.



Fresh strawberries for an Agua Fresca

The refreshing drinks are typically made with seasonal fruits such as strawberries, watermelon, honeydew, and kiwi. There are even variations made with milk, grains and seeds. Add some sugar water to the mixture, herbs or spices and you've got a delicious non-alcoholic drink.

Since strawberries are the first fruit to ripen in spring and have a short six-week season; I'm going to enjoy the fruit for as long as I can. Therefore, In celebration of Cinco de Mayo and strawberries, here's a recipe for a thirst quenching, agua fresca. It's so good you'll be saying "Qué bueno!"

(Agua Fresca de Fresa) Strawberry Fresh Fruit Water Recipe

Servings: 8-10

Prep time: 20 minutes

Ingredients

- 4 cups (620 grams) strawberries, washed, stalk removed, and sliced
- 8-10 washed strawberries for garnish (optional)
- 1 cup (200 grams) white sugar
- 8 cups (2 liters) cold water
- 1 bio lime, cut into wedges (optional)

- 8-10 fresh mint sprigs (optional)
- Ice cubes or crushed ice (optional)



Agua Fresca de Fresa (Strawberry Fresh Fruit Water)

Directions

1. In a glass bowl, carefully mix together sliced strawberries, sugar, and 1 cup of water. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and place in the refrigerator for about 4 hours or overnight.
2. Pour the strawberry mixture into a blender. Blend on high speed until smooth. Alternatively, you can use a hand blender and mix until the strawberry slices are fully blended.
3. Pour the blended strawberry mixture through a fine wire sieve set over a large mixing bowl.
4. Add the remaining 7 cups cold water to the strawberry water and mix well.
5. Pour the mixture into festive glasses filled with ice. If desired, garnish with lime wedges, mint, and a whole strawberry.