

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!

Homemade Prague Citrus-ade Recipe

This homemade Prague Citrus-ade recipe is simply refreshing and simple to make.

We spent a wonderful hot and muggy spring vacation in Prague and although the local beer looked inviting, it contained too much alcohol to safely quench my thirst during our long hours marveling at the wondrous sights of Prague.

As we walked around town, I noticed many restaurants were serving a lemonade-type drink. Since I was parched, I ordered a pitcher for our table and as soon as I took a sip of the refreshing drink made with lemons, limes, and oranges—I became hooked on homemade Prague Citrus-ade.



Homemade Prague Citrus-ade

Most Prague restaurants have their own recipe for making homemade Prague Citrus-ade, so since my visit, I've been trying to replicate it. It's actually fairly easy to prepare; you begin with simple syrup and a combination of citrus fruit juices.

Homemade Prague Citrus-ade Recipe (Serves 6-8)

Simple Syrup Ingredients

- 3/4 cup brown or white, granulated sugar
- 1 cup water

Citrus-ade Ingredients

- 1 cup fresh squeezed lemon juice (4-6 lemons)
- 1/4 cup fresh squeezed lime juice (2-3 limes)
- 1/2 cup fresh squeezed orange juice (1-2 oranges)
- 3 to 5 cups cold water
- Ice cubes
- Sparkling water
- Lime or lemon slices
- Fresh mint sprigs

Method

Place the sugar and water in a small saucepan and bring to a simmer over medium heat, stirring until the sugar dissolves completely. Remove the pan from the heat and cool completely.

If the citrus fruit is waxed, lightly scrub the peel with a cloth or kitchen brush to remove the wax. Next, roll the lemon and limes on the counter top to ensure you'll be able to release as many juices as possible.

Pour the citrus juices and about 1 cup of the sugar water into a serving pitcher.

Add about 2 cups of cold water to the citrus-ade mixture. Now taste; adding more simple syrup and water if needed. Any remaining simple syrup can be stored in the refrigerator for several weeks.



Homemade Prague Citrus-ade ingredients

Fill tall glasses halfway with ice cubes and pour the citrus mixture over the ice cubes. Add a splash of sparkling water and garnish with a lemon or lime slices and mint sprigs.

If you want to add a bit of “wow” factor to the table, use a Bohemian crystal pitcher and matching glasses. I personally don’t have any Bohemian crystal glassware, but if I did, I’d follow my own suggestion. ☐

The variations are limitless with this basic recipe, so get creative with flavors and enjoy.

Prague Citrus-ade. It’s easy to make, refreshing, and the perfect drink to cool down and celebrate summer.

French Epiphany Cake Recipe (Galette des rois)

French Epiphany Cake Recipe

Today is January 6th Epiphany, marking the visit of the Magi to the Christ child. People all over the world people are celebrating Epiphany by baking cakes and celebrating the holiday with friends and family members. In thousands of lucky homes a delicious warm French Epiphany Cake or *galette des rois* (kings's tart) will be served.

While living in New Orleans, to celebrate Epiphany or the beginning of the Carnival, I traditionally bought or [baked a Mardi Gras King Cake](#), but today I decided to bake a *galette des rois*.

I should be taking down the Christmas decorations but baking is so much more fun ☺



French Epiphany Cake

The French Epiphany cake *galette des rois* is a light dessert made of puff-pastry filled with a creamy frangipane (almond paste). The cake is relatively easy to make requiring about one hour of time from start to finish.

Epiphany Cake Traditions

The Epiphany Cake is served to celebrate the feast of Epiphany or Twelfth night marking the end of Christmas when the Magi brought gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh to the Christ Child Jesus. There is a tradition dating back to the middle ages that after the cake is served, the last piece (“piece for

poor” or “piece for the virgin”) is reserved for the first needy person knocking at your door. It’s not likely to happen, so I follow the second tradition.

In every French Epiphany or Mardi Gras cake there’s a little surprise hidden inside. In France it’s a fava bean (*fève*) or trinket (*santon*). In New Orleans a baby Jesus figurine is hidden in the colorful cake to symbolize rebirth or renewal. The person who gets the piece with the trinket is declared king or queen, gets to wear the crown, and should buy the next cake.



Mardi Gras King Cake trinket, Wiki photo by Nono64

I wore the crown last year, so this year I’m baking a French Epiphany cake to see who will become king or queen in my home today.

French Epiphany Cake Recipe (Galette des rois)

Ingredients

- 500 grams (1 lb 2 ounces) ready-made puff pastry
- 100 grams (4 ounces) finely ground almonds
- 75 grams (3 ounces) sugar
- 50 grams (2 ounces) softened butter
- 2 medium eggs
- 1 teaspoon French Cognac (optional)
- 1 bean (*fève*), almond, or *santon* (figurine)

Directions

1. Pre-heat the oven to 210 Celsius (410 Fahrenheit).
2. Divide the pasty in two parts. Roll out each to a circle about 23 cm (9 inches) wide or size of your pie pan.
3. By hand or using a stand mixer, mix the almonds, sugar, butter, one egg, and Cognac until a smooth paste is formed.
4. Place the first circle on the non-stick pie dish and spread the paste evenly across but not too close to the edges.
5. Place a *fève* or figurine on top of the paste near the outer edge.
6. Carefully place the second disk on top and seal the two edges with a fork.
7. Brush the top with the egg yolk and decorate by making a swirl pattern using a knife.
8. Bake for 30 minutes or until golden.

Before serving a warm slice of French Epiphany Cake Recipe (Galette des rois), warn your guests of the trinket to avoid an unnecessary visit to the dentist.

Bon appetit!

French Le Puy Green Lentils

French Le Puy Green Lentils

I'm not superstitious. I just do it every year. On New Year's Day for a year of good health and prosperity, I eat black-eyed peas and some sort of leafy green vegetable like cabbage. The black-eyed peas represent coins and the cabbage represents greenbacks (dollar bills). Then I bake homemade gold-colored cornbread muffins in hopes the proper New Year's Day meal will bring more fortune in the year to come.



French Le Puy green lentils

So every year I head off to the grocery store in my German village in pursuit of black-eyed peas. This year I waited too long and there were no black-eyed peas remaining. None. Nada.

In fact, the bean section shelves were empty.

I started to freak out a bit so went home and scoured the kitchen drawers for at least a half bag of black-eyed peas I had brought back from the U.S. I didn't find a single stinking black-eyed pea but instead, found something even better. A box of caviar, well the caviar of lentils, a box of French Le Puy green lentils.

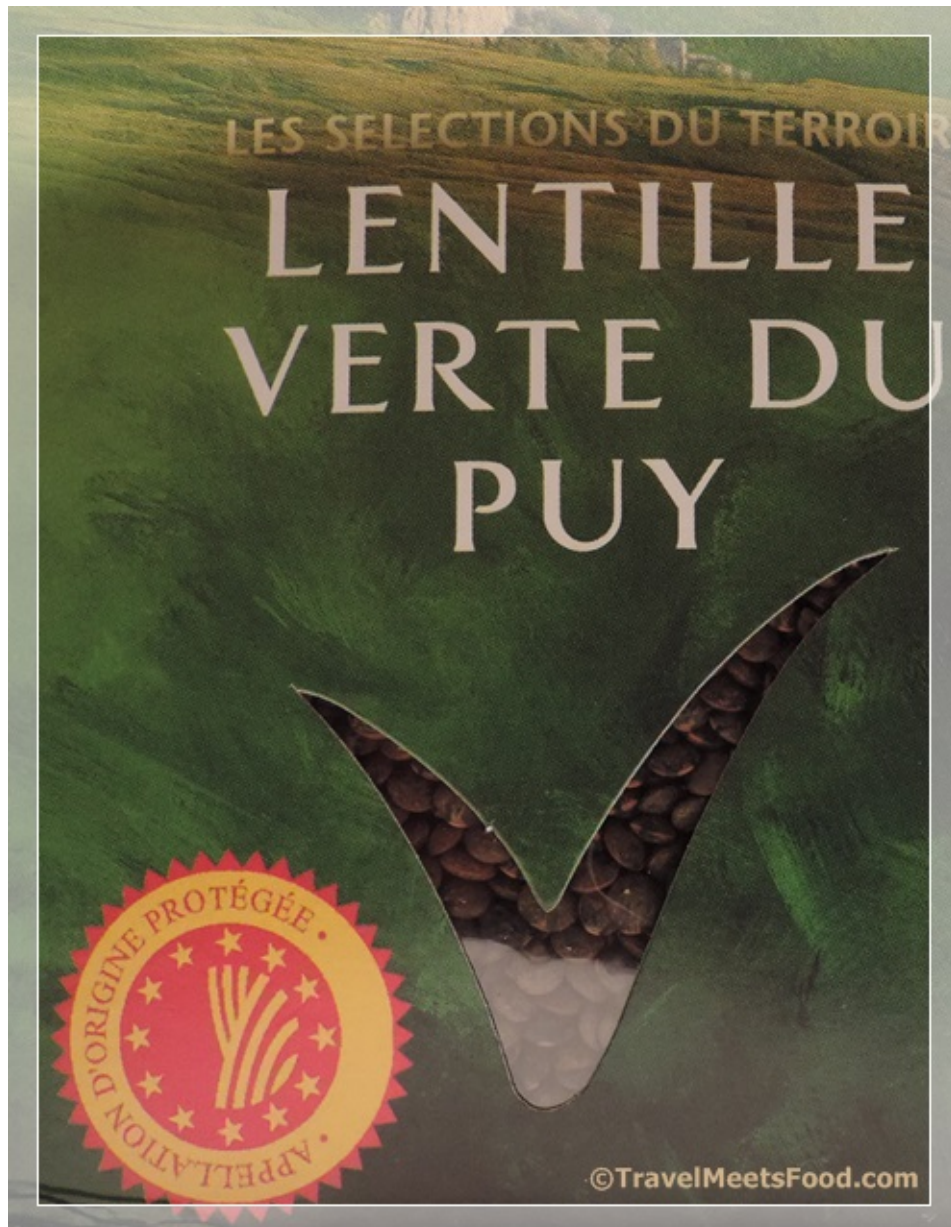
Show me the Edible Money

I thought I knew my lentils pretty well. I cook with yellow, red, green, and even the fine black beluga caviar lentils. Then I learned about the real-deal; true French Le Puy (pronounced PWEE) green lentils are considered to be the best lentils in the world.

Dark green-grey in color with a blue marbling, French Le Puy green lentils are grown on the rich volcanic soil of a mountain plateau around the French town of Le Puy en Velay in the Haute Loire region. The climate is perfect for lentils with lots of sunshine and less humidity so the lentils dry on the plant. The perfect conditions means cooking French Le Puy will only take about 20 minutes, retain a superior texture, and will reward you with a distinct peppery or nutty flavor.

Look for the AOC Seal of Authenticity

When looking for authentic French Le Puy green lentils you should see an AOC seal on the package, certifying they are true *lentilles du Puy*. You might be in shock when you see the price (three-four times than normal lentils) and be tempted to buy the cheaper lentil or even an imposter. Don't hesitate to open the pocketbook a little wider and purchase at least one package of the caviar of lentils, they are so worth it.



French Le Puy Green Lentils AOC authenticity

So, will eating French Le Puy green lentils bring you a year of prosperity? I'm not sure, but I'll enjoy eating the caviar of lentils anyway.

Every country has their own list of lucky foods. What's yours?

How to Open Champagne Correctly

How to Open Champagne Correctly

Have you [decided on a Champagne or sparkling wine](#) to celebrate? Did you select the right glass? Do you know how to open Champagne correctly? If not, no worries. Here are a few tips on how to prep the glasses, chill, cork, and pour a glass Champagne or sparkling wine.

<http://youtu.be/nDBKqoaCTkch><http://>

Keep the Glasses

If you invested in expensive Champagne or sparkling wine glasses, you may want to wash them by hand using a very fragrance-free mild detergent. Add a drop of mild detergent to each glass and sponge the soap around to remove all stains or marks. Thoroughly rinse the glasses, ensuring no soap residue is left on your champagne flute as this will interfere with the flavor and affect the carbonation of the champagne.

Carefully dry the glasses (twisting a towel inside to dry puts pressure on the glass and may cause breakage). Store them upright and shelter them from dust use until the next use.

Chill the Bubbly

Bubbly is best at a cool temperature (approximately 45 degrees Fahrenheit (7 Celsius)). If your bottle isn't yet chilled yet and the countdown is near, place the bottle in a bucket with ice, water and salt to quickly chill it.

Don't leave the bubbly in the freezer. Doing so will disturb the balance of the alcohol and ruin the liquid gold.

Cork and Pour the Bubbly

Old films show people opening bubbly with a loud popping noise of the cork, but the cork should ease out of the bottle with a slight hint of sound. We're talking Champagne or sparkling wine, not a can of brewski.



French Sparkling Wine Crémant

Here's what you need to do to open Champagne correctly and impress your guests:

1. First, pull off the foil to reveal the cork (*bouchon*).
2. Second, cover the cork with a lovely cloth napkin or your finger and untwist to loosen the wire cage (*muselet*). There's 70 pounds behind the cork so you'll want to be careful not to point towards a person or precious item.

3. Third, with the base of the bottle pressing you, tilt the top of the bottle away from you (and your guests) at a 45-degree angle.
4. Fourth, still grasping the cork and wire cage, gently twist the bottle and tilt the cork a bit to allow some gasses to escape. You'll hear soft pop.
5. Fifth, pour the Champagne into flute or tulip glasses. If there is any leftover bubbly, use a Champagne stopper to preserve the wine's sparkle for many hours.

Now that you know how to open Champagne correctly you can finally enjoy your glass of bubbly and move onto kissing and making resolutions.

Happy New Year's Eve!!