

GREEN CHILE NAVAJO TACOS

Navajo tacos feature tender pulled pork, roasted green chilies and traditional taco toppings, all served on Indian fry bread.



Packed with pork flavor, permeated by roasted green chile, these Navajo tacos find their roots in New Mexican cuisine. I shared a similar recipe last year, with a slight variation, I added ranch style beans; [Navajo Tacos with Green Chile Stew](#).

As a side note: I've been schooled by a recent blog visitor, Michael Chapel about the spelling of Green Chile (Chili). Setting me straight, he shared that New Mexicans take great offense to the incorrect spelling "Chili". As a matter of fact, In 1983, New Mexico Senator Pete Domenici went on record before congress with his official clarification as to the correct spelling of "Chile" [\[Domenici, P. 1983. The correct way to spell chile. Congressional Record 129 \(149\) \(Nov. 3\).\]](#) . I was born in Albuquerque, NM in 1960, you'd think I have a handle on this one, obviously NOT! In an

effort not to offend my fellow New Mexicans, I've made the correction. However, I still need to update my photos with the correct spelling.

Please take into account that, despite my spelling mishap, my recipe rings true with traditional flavors. I find a bit of comfort in Senator Domenici's congressional statement, "A naivete exists among native New Mexicans who wrongly assume that everyone spells it with an 'e.'" Yes, that would be me! Thank you Michael for bringing this to my attention. My sincerest apologies!

My green chile recipe follows a more traditional path, by sticking to the basics; pork roast, roasted green chiles, oregano, water and a few minor ingredients to round out the dish. No beans!!

As for the Navajo Fry Bread; the recipes are quite similar with one exception, powdered milk.

History/Origin of Navajo Fry bread:

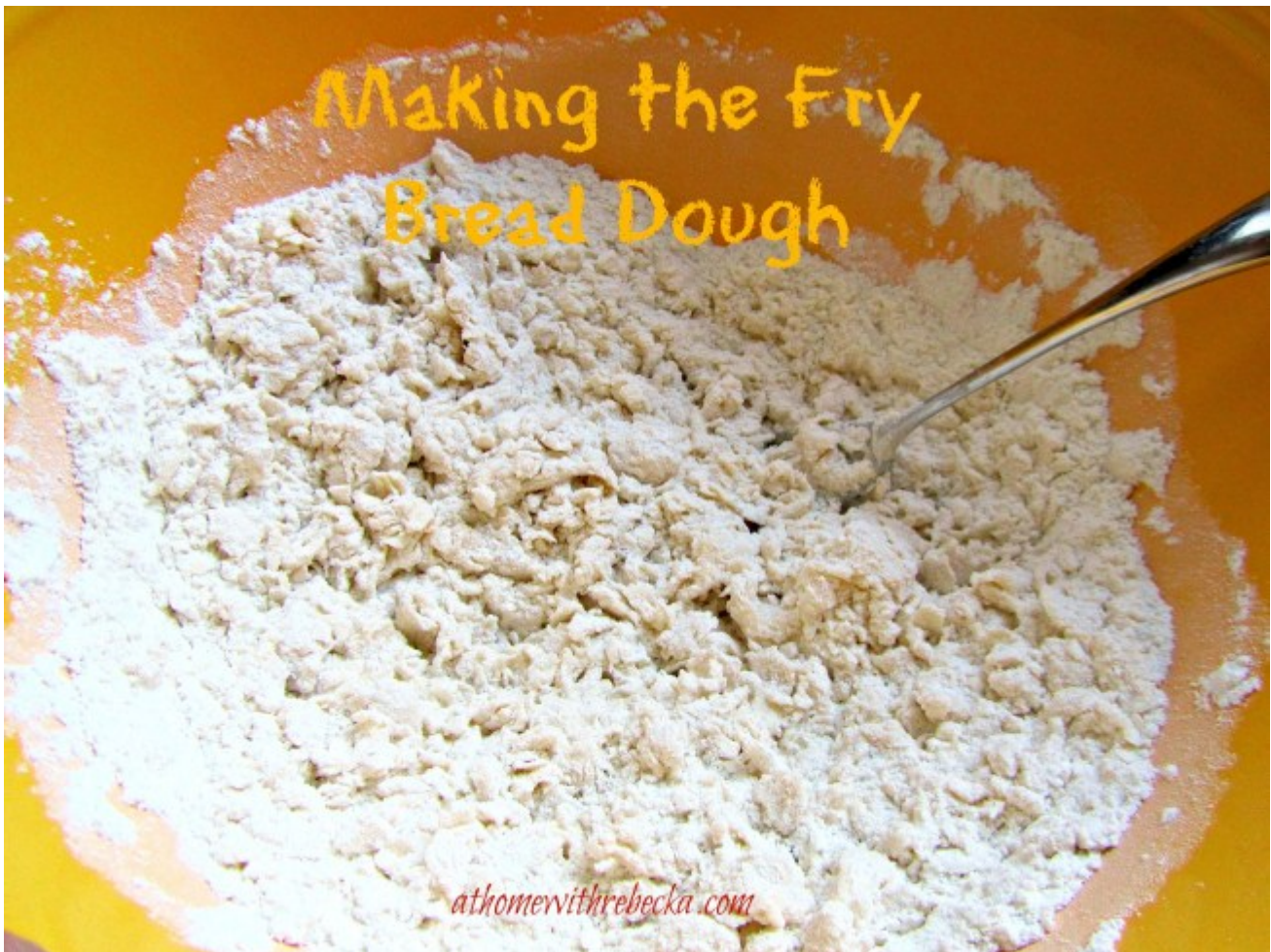
On the heels of several failed treaties, in 1861 military leaders formulated plans to send the Navajo on the Long Walk. Indians from Arizona, Colorado, Utah and New Mexico, were among the tribes forced from their lands. Hundreds of American Indians perished on the 300 mile walk to the Bosque Redondo reservation located near the Pecos River, in eastern New Mexico.

Once on the reservation, the government supplied lard, flour, salt, sugar, baking powder or yeast, and powdered milk but often times they were rancid. Fry bread came from these few foods provided during the 4 years of captivity. Since that time, it has become common food at PowWows.

To some, Indian Fry Bread is a sacred tradition. It is to be

consumed by the people until the earth has again become purified.

Since that time, fry bread recipes have taken on nuissance from different tribes throughout the US. Some use yeast, while others are made entirely without leavening (no baking powder). I'm happy to eat any style you set in front of me, but I have a kindred connection to the Navajo recipe. For a more detailed account of my youth and my dear friends, the Concha family click [HERE](#).



Step #1



Step #2



Step #3



Step #4



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2013-09-24 22:58:21



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Prep Time

30 min

Total Time

5 hr 30 min

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FOR THE GREEN CHILE

1. 1 3-4 pound pork shoulder, preferably bone in
2. 3 tablespoons vegetable oil
3. 4 roasted green chiles
4. 1/2 medium onion chopped (pureed)
5. 2 cloves garlic
6. 1 bay leaf
7. 4 sprigs fresh oregano
8. 1 tablespoon medium heat red chile powder
9. 1 can Rotel can tomatoes
10. 1-2 tablespoons chicken base
11. 1 teaspoon garlic salt
12. 4-7 cups water
13. 1/4 cup cornstarch,
14. 3-4 teaspoons cold water
15. salt and pepper to taste

FOR THE NAVAJO FRY BREAD - NAVAJO TACO

1. 3 cups flour
2. 1/2 cup dry powdered milk (substitute regular milk if you can't find powdered)
3. 1 tablespoon baking powder
4. 1/2 warm water or milk
5. enough oil to fry bread, about 1-2 quarts

FOR THE GREEN CHILE

1. Heat oil in a large stockpot over medium heat
2. Season pork shoulder roast with salt and pepper on all sides area
3. While roast is browning, use gloves and clean the chiles.
4. It is absolutely crucial NOT to wash the chiles with water. Washing them removes too much of the chile flavor. Cut or pull the stem end off, turn pepper upside down and gently squeeze seeds out of the chile, peeling the skin off as you go. There will be a few stubborn seeds and a few pieces of skin, don't worry, they add more yummy flavor
5. Chop chile, set aside
6. Remove roast from stockpot, place on a large rimmed dish, to catch juices
7. Add onions to the pot, saute for a few seconds, stirring until translucent
8. Add garlic, stir to combine, cook only a few seconds, do not burn
9. Add 1 cup water to deglaze the pan, add chicken base, bay leaf, oregano, garlic salt, red chile powder, chopped green chile, and Rotel
10. Return roast to stockpot, add enough water to almost cover the roast, bring to a boil stirring occasionally, reduce heat, cover and cook for 3 hours
11. Test flavor of broth, add more salt and pepper to taste, if roast is tender enough (meat

- falling off the bone) remove meat from pot, using 2 large forks, pull meat apart and chop into chunks (cook additional 30 mins to 1 hour if the roast is still tough)
12. Return chopped meat to stock pot, cover, and cook over medium low heat for 1 hour
 13. Mix cornstarch with water until there are no lumps, add to pot and stir until sauce is slightly thickened

FOR THE FRY BREAD

1. Combine the first 5 ingredients in a large mixing bowl
2. mix with fork until dough comes together, add more flour if dough is sticky
3. Knead dough until soft and smooth, do not overwork the dough or it will become tough
4. Cover bowl with a clean damp cloth and let rest for 30 - 2 hours
5. When dough has rested, heat the oil in a deep fryer or cast iron pan to 375 degrees
6. Pull off golf ball size pieces of dough, flatten each piece using hands until round and flat, about 1/4 inch thick
7. For a puffy taco, dough can also be rolled out thinly on a floured surface
8. Cook in hot oil until lightly browned on both sides, about 1 minute per side or more if necessary
9. Drain fry bread on paper towels

Notes

1. Navajo Taco Assembly
2. Allow one or two pieces of fry bread per person, using a deep plate with a rim to hold chile, ladle hot green chile over the bread, garnish with raw onions, shredded cheese, lettuce or your favorite toppings
3. Toss in powdered sugar for a delicious dessert treat

By Rebecka Evans

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