

Roasted Poblano Chile Verde

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Serves 8-10

- 3* poblano chiles, roasted, skinned/seeded and chopped (see below) [*double this amount to make a freezer stash]
- 3 Tablespoons olive oil
- 3-4 lbs pork tenderloin, pork loin or turkey breast, trimmed and cut into 1½" cubes
- 2 large yellow or white onions, finely chopped (approx. 3 cups)
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 Tablespoon dried cumin
- 1 Tablespoon dried oregano
- 2 jars (15 oz. each) salsa verde (Xochitl brand, preferably)
- 1 box (14 oz.) chicken stock
- 1 chicken bouillon cube
- 1 squeeze (approx. ½ teaspoon) agave nectar or honey
- Kosher salt

Roast the Poblanos

Heat a gas grill to medium-high. Place the whole chiles directly on the grill grates and close the lid. After 5 minutes, check the chiles; if they are nicely charred on the bottom, turn them over using tongs. Check again after a few more minutes. Repeat until chiles are charred on most sides; then remove from grill and set them on baking sheet or large plate. Cover with plastic wrap and let cool. [Note: you can also char the chiles on a baking sheet under a broiler.]

When chiles are cool, slip off the burnt skins (wearing gloves if you have sensitive skin), then pull off the stem tops and seeds. (Use a spoon to scrape off seeds, or give the chiles a quick rinse under cold water.) Be careful not to touch your eyes during this process! Slice the chiles into strips and then chop into pieces.

Prepare the Chile Verde

Trim most of the fat and silver skin from the meat and cut into approx. 1½” cubes. Heat oven to 325°F or set out slow-cooker/crock pot. Place a very large, heavy pan or Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Add 1 Tablespoon (a splash) of olive oil to the pan. Working in batches to prevent pan overcrowding, add the meat to the hot oil and let sear for 5 minutes. Resist the urge to stir; the meat will release from the pan when it’s nicely browned and ready to turn.

When at least 2 sides of the meat cubes have browned, remove from pan and repeat with the next batch of meat (adding more olive oil as necessary). The meat cubes will not be all the way cooked. To keep dirty dishes to a minimum, you can place the browned meat back on the same platter/baking sheet with the uncooked meat cubes since it’s all going back into the pot anyway.

Once all the meat has been browned and removed from the pot, add the diced onions and sauté a few minutes until softened, adding another splash of olive oil if necessary. Note that in this batch I got lazy and just added the onions to the pot with the meat. Since the chile verde cooked for so long in the oven, it didn’t matter in the end. Sautéing first is safer, though; the texture of not fully cooked onions would detract from the dish. Then add the browned pork and any accumulated juices back to the pot.

Add the garlic and cumin and sauté another minute. Add oregano, salsa verde, chicken stock, bouillon cube and chopped poblanos. Cover pot and bake in oven at 325°F for 3+ hours (or place in crock pot and set on low for 8 hours or high for 3-4 hours), until sauce has thickened and meat is falling-apart tender. (It should flake apart with a fork.)

Stir and then taste for seasoning; add a small squeeze of agave nectar or honey (this helps round out the flavors), and then a few pinches of kosher salt only if necessary. If mixture seems dry or overly salty, add a cup of chicken stock or water.

Serve in bowls with desired garnishes. (Shown here with corn tortilla crisps, diced avocado and a drizzle of my Cilantro Lime sauce.) Can also be served over rice or with warmed tortillas.

Corn Tortilla Crisps

- 1 package white corn tortillas, cut into ¼” slivers
- Vegetable oil
- Kosher salt

Cut tortillas into ¼” slivers. Set a large tray or baking sheet covered with paper towels next to the stove. In a large cast iron pan or Dutch oven, pour in approx. ½” – 1” vegetable oil. Heat on medium high until shimmering. Fry tortilla slivers in batches, about a handful at a time. Using a strainer or tongs, stir the tortilla slivers around a little until they are golden brown. (You don’t need to turn them.) Remove slivers from oil and let drain on paper towel tray. Sprinkle with kosher salt while still hot. Repeat with the next batch until all strips are fried. Store in an airtight bag or container.

Cilantro Lime Sauce

- 1 small bunch cilantro, washed & dried (roots and thick stems twisted off) (approx. 2 cups packed)
- 1 Tablespoon fresh lime juice
- 1 small clove garlic, pressed or minced
- ½ teaspoon ground cumin
- ¼ teaspoon kosher salt
- 1 cup reduced fat sour cream or fat-free plain Greek yogurt
- 1 teaspoon olive oil
- Few drops agave nectar or honey

Add all ingredients to food processor or beaker if using stick/immersion blender. Pulse and puree until smooth. (Add a little more olive oil to aid pureeing, if necessary.) Adjust seasoning to taste (i.e., another pinch of salt or drop of agave/honey) Refrigerate until ready to serve; will keep for several days.