

The Whole Enchiladasagna

Ingredients

Sauce

- 1/3 cup olive oil (75 milliliters)
- 2 tablespoons flour (20 grams)
- 3 ½ teaspoons cayenne (3 grams)
- 1 15-ounce can of plain tomato sauce
- 4 cups water (1000 milliliters)
- 2 cloves garlic, finely diced
- Dash cumin
- 2/3 cup finely diced onion (75 grams)
- ¼ cup brown sugar (30 grams)
- Small dash cinnamon

Enchiladas

- Olive oil
- 1 roasted red pepper, diced
- 1 roasted poblano pepper, diced
- Half an onion, chopped
- 1 orange bell pepper, chopped
- 12 corn tortillas
- 2 pounds cheese, grated (equal parts cheddar and Monterey Jack)
- Joe's Poblano-Lime Chicken (see below), preferably marinated a day ahead, shredded into strips (optional)

Directions

Sauce

Heat oil in a large pot over medium heat. Combine flour and cayenne, then whisk into the oil. This should bubble and sizzle a little; keep whisking rapidly (and don't inhale at too close a range unless you want to clear up your sinuses!). As soon as it's combined, pour in the can of tomato sauce and continue whisking. Stir in water and increase to medium-high heat, so it is just starting to simmer. This will seem like a lot of water, but it will thicken as you cook, as well as when you bake the dish later on. Stir in the garlic, cumin, onion, brown sugar, and cinnamon. Keep at a low simmer for 20 minutes (try to prevent it from boiling), stirring every once in awhile. Use a mesh strainer to remove the onions and garlic. Let sit and cool while you prepare to make your enchiladas.

Enchiladas

First, you'll need to prep all your fillings. Grate your cheese and chop up your veggies.

If you're using chicken, we recommend Joe's Poblano-Lime Chicken Marinade on chicken tenders (preferably the day before). Start with about a ½ pound of chicken meat in an airtight container and cover halfway with olive oil. Cut one lime into quarters, squeeze juice into container, and throw the rest of lime in. Add about 1 tablespoon diced poblano and 1 tablespoon diced red pepper, 1 clove of garlic (diced), and about a shake or two each of salt, pepper, and cumin. Add water until chicken is submerged. Shake and let marinate for 8 to 24 hours. Pan-sear the chicken in olive oil on high heat for a few minutes on each side. Joe prefers a cast-iron pan. The chicken is done when you can pull it apart.

If you're roasting your own red and poblano peppers, place whole peppers on a foil-lined cookie sheet and bake at 375° for approximately 40 minutes, turning once halfway through. When cool enough to handle, peel the skins off; then dice and set aside. You can also buy these in a can or jar.

In a few teaspoons of oil, quickly sauté the chopped onion and bell pepper over high heat, shaking or stirring often, for about 4 minutes, until they just begin to soften. The idea is to keep these crunchy and fresh-tasting, in contrast to the roasted peppers.

Now, time to layer your enchiladasagna! Start with a thin layer of sauce in the bottom of a casserole pan (a 9x12 works, or two smaller ones), then a layer of tortillas, then cheese and peppers (and chicken, if using), then more cheese, more sauce, more tortillas dipped in sauce, etc. Create as many layers as you wish, and finish with sauce-dipped tortillas and a sprinkling of cheese. We each used three layers, which was 6 tortillas in a small casserole and 9 in a medium one.

Cover with foil and bake at 350° for 30 minutes. Remove foil and bake for 10 more minutes. Let set up before cutting and serving.