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Healthy Salsa Recipes

Spice up any meal

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What is Salsa?

Healthy Salsa Recipes

1. Traditional Salsa
2. Salsa Ranchera
3. Paradise Salsa
4. Tomatillo Salsa
5. Mango-Avocado Salsa
6. Colourful Pineapple Salsa
7. Chipotle-Ancho Salsa
8. Chilli Pepper Salsa
9. Black Bean Salsa

What Is Salsa?

Salsa is the Spanish word for sauce, and the traditional salsa recipe we know and love, is recognised as a Mexican dish. In fact there are literally hundreds of salsa recipes many of which have origins in Spain and Italy, and many use spices grown in the Far East.

Most salsas are based on tomatoes and various forms of chilli peppers which give it the unmistakeable spiciness, but can include a whole range of other ingredients including onions, garlic, bell peppers, other spices and even fruit.

Primarily used as a condiment with Mexican dishes, especially as a dip for tortilla crisps, salsa can be used to liven up any meal as a sauce or a healthy replacement for ketchup.

And the health benefits of salsa are numerous. Tomatoes are rich in heart healthy lycopenes. These carotenoids may help to prevent certain cancers and reduce heart disease.

The active substance in chilli peppers, capsaicin has been shown to have an anti-inflammatory effect which may help people with rheumatoid arthritis. It also has anti-ulcer, anti-cancer and anti-bacterial properties. And capsaicin has a slight thermogenic effect which could play a role in weight loss.

Salsa is low in calories and low in fat, the only oil used in these recipes being heart healthy olive oil. It is an excellent substitute for ketchup which is usually loaded with sugar.

Salsa is also rich in vitamins and minerals. It is high in vitamin A, vitamin B6 and vitamin C, and is a good source of iron, magnesium and potassium which helps maintain normal blood pressure.

So as one of the healthiest condiments around add some salsa to your diet today. Avoid the commercial shop bought salsa's which can be high in added salt and sugar and have fun making your own.

Here are a few recipes to get you started!

Traditional Salsa

Everyone loves salsa….everyone I know anyway. Here's an easy recipe for traditional salsa that serves 10

What you need:

5 plum tomatoes, peeled and chopped

1/2 cup onion, chopped

1 fresh jalapeno pepper, seeded and chopped

1 tbsp. lime juice

1 clove garlic, minced

1/4 tsp. sea salt

1/4 cup fresh coriander, minced

What you do:

Combine all of the ingredients in a small bowl; cover and refrigerate until chilled. Serve with tortilla crisps, use as a topping on your favourite tacos, burritos or other Mexican style favourites.

Salsa Ranchera

Ingredients:

2 tomatoes, peeled and chopped

1/2 onion, chopped

2 garlic cloves, chopped

1 tbsp. olive oil

Serrano chilli, chopped (to taste)

Oregano (to taste)

The juice of half a lime

Sea salt (to taste)

Instructions:

Combine all the ingredients in a medium bowl. Chill for 30 minutes or more before serving.

Paradise Salsa

This fresh, fruity salsa is a great addition to any chicken, fish or beef recipe.

What you need:

1/2 fresh pineapple, peeled, cored and chopped

1 mango, peeled, seeded and chopped

1/3 cup coriander leaves

1/4 cup lime juice

1 small red onion, coarsely chopped

What you do:

Place the pineapple, mango, coriander, lime juice, and red onion in a food processor or blender. Pulse until ingredients are combined and chopped to desired texture.

Tomatillo Salsa

The measurements here can be increased or decreased depending on your taste. If you can't find tomatillos you can use roasted tomatoes but this will give it a sweeter taste.

What to use:

A few tomatillos

A few fresh jalapenos

An onion

2 or 3 tomatoes or one can of stewed tomatoes and the juice

1 clove of garlic

Some sea salt to taste

Some coriander to taste

What to do:

First, boil the tomatillos for about five minutes until soft; cool and remove the skin. Combine all of the ingredients in a blender until you get the consistency that suits you. Serve with warm tortilla crisps.

Mango-Avocado Salsa

This salsa recipe is great with white fish or chicken dishes.

What you use:

1 mango, peeled, seeded and diced

1 avocado, peeled, pitted and diced

4 medium tomatoes, diced

1 jalapeno pepper, seeded and minced

1/2 cup fresh coriander, chopped

3 garlic cloves, minced

1 tsp. salt

2 tbsp. fresh lime juice

1/4 cup chopped red onion

3 tbsp. olive oil

What you do:

In a medium size bowl, combine the mango, avocado, tomatoes, jalapeno, coriander and garlic. Stir in the salt, lime juice, red onion and olive oil. Chill in the refrigerator for 30 minutes before serving. Serves 6.

Colourful Pineapple Salsa

This salsa goes great with chicken, fish and beef dishes.

Ingredients:

1 cup fresh pineapple, finely chopped

1/2 cup diced red bell pepper

1/2 cup diced green bell pepper

1 cup frozen corn kernels, thawed

1 (15 oz) can black beans, drained and rinsed

1/4 cup onion, chopped

1/4 cup orange juice

1/4 cup fresh coriander, chopped

1/2 tsp. ground cumin

Salt and pepper, to taste

Instructions:

In a large bowl, combine fruit and veggies, beans and peppers, orange juice and coriander. Add seasonings; cover and chill for about 30 minutes before serving.

Chipotle-Ancho Salsa

The combination of chipotle and ancho chillies makes this salsa great for dipping or as a nice addition to any Mexican dish.

Here's what you need:

1 (14.5 oz) can whole peeled tomatoes

1 fresh jalapeno pepper, seeded

1 chipotle chilli in adobo sauce, seeded

1 (1 inch) piece dried ancho chilli pepper

1 clove garlic

2 1/2 tbsp. onion, chopped

1 tbsp. fresh coriander, chopped

1 tbsp. lemon juice

3/4 tsp. sea salt

1/4 tsp. white sugar

1/4 tsp. ground cumin

Here's what you do:

Place tomatoes, peppers, chillies, garlic, onion, coriander, lemon juice, salt, sugar, and cumin in blender. Pulse until the salsa reaches your desired consistency. Let stand for 1 hour before serving. Serves 8.

Chilli Pepper Salsa

This recipe uses fresh roasted chilli peppers and red bell peppers. To roast the peppers, first slit them to allow the steam to escape; then place them on an oven rack and grill, turning occasionally for 25 minutes or until the skins darken and blister. Cover with a damp cloth and let cool. Peel off the skins and discard, along with the seeds.

Ingredients:

8 cups tomatoes, peeled and chopped

1 cup roasted chilli peppers, chopped

3/4 cup roasted red bell peppers, chopped

3 cups onions, chopped

1 cup vinegar

1 can tomato puree

3 garlic cloves, minced

1 tsp. sea salt

1/2 tsp. pepper

Instructions:

In a large bowl, combine all of the ingredients and stir. Place in the refrigerator and chill for 30 minutes before serving.

Black Bean Salsa

This salsa recipe can be "heated up" by using a variety of hot peppers in place of the jalapenos

Ingredients:

1 lb dry black beans, cooked, drained

3 lbs ripe tomatoes, chopped

1 large onion, diced

1 red bell pepper, diced

1 green bell pepper, diced

1/4 cup olive oil

2 tbsp. chilli powder

3/4 cup lime juice

2 tsp. sea salt

4 jalapenos (or other hot peppers) minced

1 bunch fresh coriander, chopped

Instructions:

In a large bowl, combine all the ingredients and stir until well mixed. Cover and refrigerate until chilled, about 30 minutes. Serve with your favourite Mexican dishes.