

Chicken Tinga

Authentic Mexican Chicken Tinga with smoky chipotle peppers. Perfect for tacos, tostadas, and more. Easy 45-minute recipe with shredded chicken.

15 min

PREP

30 min

COOK

45 min

TOTAL

4

SERVINGS

Easy

DIFFICULTY

Chicken Tinga

Ingredients

- 2 chicken meat
- 1 onion
- 4 clove garlic
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tsp oregano
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp black pepper

Instructions

- 1 Cook the Chicken**

Place 2 pounds boneless, skinless chicken breasts or thighs in a large pot and cover with water by 1 inch. Add 1 teaspoon salt and bring to a boil over high heat.
- 2** Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer for 20-25 minutes until chicken is fully cooked and reaches an internal temperature of 165°F (74°C). Remove chicken from pot and let cool for 10 minutes, reserving 1 cup of the cooking liquid.
- 3** Shred the cooled chicken into bite-sized pieces using two forks, pulling the meat apart along the grain. Set aside.
- 4 Make the Tinga Sauce**

Heat 2 tablespoons vegetable oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add 1 large sliced onion and cook for 5-7 minutes, stirring occasionally, until softened and lightly golden.
- 5** Add 4 minced garlic cloves and cook for 1 minute, stirring constantly, until fragrant but not browned.
- 6** Add 2-3 chopped chipotle peppers in adobo sauce, 1 can (14.5 oz) diced tomatoes with their juices, 1 teaspoon dried oregano, 1 teaspoon ground cumin, and 1 teaspoon salt. Stir well to combine.
- 7 Combine and Simmer**

Add the shredded chicken to the sauce and stir until well coated. If the mixture looks too thick, add the reserved chicken cooking liquid ¼ cup at a time until you reach your desired consistency.
- 8** Reduce heat to low and simmer uncovered for 15-20 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the sauce has thickened and reduced by about half and coats the chicken nicely.

- 9 Taste and adjust seasoning with additional salt, pepper, or chipotle peppers as needed. Remove from heat and let rest for 5 minutes before serving.

Tips

For the most authentic flavor, char your tomatoes and onions directly over an open flame or under the broiler before adding them to the sauce. This adds an extra layer of smoky depth that complements the chipotle peppers perfectly.

Don't skip the searing step for the chicken. Browning the meat before simmering creates additional flavor through the Maillard reaction, resulting in a more complex and satisfying dish.

Save time by using rotisserie chicken. Simply remove the skin, shred the meat, and add it to the prepared sauce for the last 10 minutes of cooking. This shortcut doesn't compromise flavor and cuts prep time significantly.

Taste and adjust the sauce before adding the chicken. The chipotle peppers can vary in heat level, so start with less and build up to your preferred spice level. Remember, you can always add more heat, but you can't take it away.

Let the dish rest for 10 minutes after cooking to allow the flavors to meld and the sauce to thicken slightly. This resting time makes a noticeable difference in the final flavor and consistency.

For meal prep success, store the tinga slightly saucier than you'd normally prefer, as it will thicken when refrigerated. Add a splash of chicken broth when reheating to restore the perfect consistency.

Freeze individual portions in ice cube trays for easy single servings. Once frozen solid, transfer to freezer bags. This method is perfect for quick taco fillings or adding protein to salads and grain bowls.