

Anatomy OF A Taco

IT'S NO SECRET that tacos are a favorite to make at home and to grab while out to eat. While these savory entrees have international roots, they are truly homegrown.

TOPPINGS: Here's where individual flair shines. Add your favorite toppings and try some new ones, too.

CHEESE: No taco would be complete without a sprinkle of shredded cheese.

HARD CORN TACO SHELL: Perfect to keep the fillings inside. Also great with a soft flour tortilla.

MEAT: Ground beef is pictured here but try pork or chicken to switch it up.



Anatomy OF A Taco

Discover how Illinois agriculture plays a role in building the perfect taco:

TORTILLA: Corn and flour tortillas can offer wildly different flavors and textures when building the perfect taco. While Illinois is known for corn – we're the #2 corn-producing state! – wheat is also a common crop grown throughout the state. And for those who prefer nachos or a side of chips and salsa, some farmers in the eastern side of the state also grow specialty white corn used to make tortilla chips.

MEAT: There's no wrong choice when it comes to picking between beef, chicken, or pork tacos – the filling all comes from dedicated livestock farmers who work hard to ensure livestock are raised with care and respect. Whether shopping in the store, visiting a local meat shop, or sourcing in bulk directly from a local farmer, rest assured that all livestock are raised with the same standards of care.

CHEESE AND SOUR CREAM: Quality dairy products come from quality cows, and that starts at the farm. In addition to rigorous standards of animal care and food safety while handling fresh milk, dairy farmers are also implementing new technologies to benefit cows, like automatic milking. This gives cows the convenience of milking on an as-wanted basis and allows the farmer to spend more time looking after the head.

TOPPINGS: Lettuce, sweet corn, tomatoes, edamame, onions – all grown in Illinois! Vegetables, like the ones listed, are grown and harvested right here in Illinois, most commonly in the summer months. You can find all of these toppings and more available fresh at Illinois farmers' markets, in your local grocery store, or even in your backyard garden.





Slow Cooker

Shredded Beef Tacos

When it comes to making tacos at home, recipe combinations are numerous. For something new on taco night, try these delicious slow cooker shredded beef tacos inspired by a visit to an Illinois corn and beef farm in partnership with Illinois Farm Families.

INGREDIENTS:

- 3.5 pound chuck roast (either boneless or bone-in)
- 1 small white onion, chopped
- 1 (14 ounce) can of diced tomatoes with green chilis
- 4 cloves of garlic, minced
- 1 poblano pepper, chopped
- 2 teaspoons cumin
- 2 teaspoons chili powder
- ½ teaspoon ground red pepper (cayenne)
- ½ teaspoon paprika
- 2 cups of beef broth
- Corn tortillas
- Mexican cheese
- Jalapenos
- Sour cream



Slow Cooker Shredded Beef Tacos

DIRECTIONS:

1. In a large slow cooker, combine the onion, diced tomatoes, garlic, poblano pepper, cumin, chili powder, ground red pepper, and paprika. Whisk together. Add the beef.
2. Next add beef broth until it just covers the beef. This is the trick to really tender beef.
3. Turn the slow cooker on to low, and let it work its magic for 6 hours.
4. After 6 hours, remove the beef from the slow cooker, and place in a bowl. Using 2 forks, shred the meat, this is an easy task since the beef is so tender. Remove the bone if there is one.
5. Use a slotted spoon to scoop the onion, tomatoes, and peppers and some of the juices in the slow cooker over the shredded beef.
6. To assemble the tacos, fill corn tortillas with the beef and add cheese, jalapenos, and sour cream on top.

Recipe and photo originally published by Kit Graham (TheKittchen.com) for Illinois Farm Families. Find more recipes like this at watchusgrow.org.





Soft Pork Tacos

with Orange Adobo

When it comes to making tacos at home, recipe combinations are numerous. For something new on taco night, try these soft pork tacos with orange adobo.

INGREDIENTS:

- 4 New York (top loin) pork chops (about 3/4-inch thick)
- 2 oranges (medium)
- 1 tsp. chile sauce (habanero, plus more for serving)
- 3/4 tsp. garlic salt
- 1 cup iceberg lettuce (shredded)
- 1/2 cup queso fresco cheese





Soft Pork Tacos with Orange Adobo

DIRECTIONS:

1. Finely grate zest from 1 orange; then juice orange. Cut peel off remaining orange, and cut orange between membranes; set segments aside.
2. In a shallow glass or ceramic dish, mix orange zest and juice with hot sauce and garlic salt. Add chops, turn to coat, and spoon orange marinade over chops. Let stand 15 to 30 minutes while heating grill.
3. Prepare a grill to medium-high heat (about 450°F.). Remove chops from marinade and discard marinade.
4. Grill chops over direct heat until the internal temperature reaches between 145°F. (medium rare) and 160°F. (medium), on a meat thermometer, 4 to 5 minutes per side. Transfer chops to cutting board and let rest 3 minutes.
5. Warm tortillas on grill for about 1 minute on each side; transfer tortillas to plate. Thinly slice chops across the grain. Make each taco with 1 tortilla, half a chop, 1-2 orange segments, and top with lettuce and queso fresco. Serve with additional hot sauce on the side.

*Recipe and photo courtesy of National Pork Board.
Learn more about cooking with pork and find new recipes at watchusgrow.org.*





Queso Dip

Classic queso made with a blend of cheese, jalapeno, chilies, and Prairie Farms® whole milk. Great to make ahead and simmer in a slow cooker to snack on all day long.

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 Tbsp avocado oil
- 1/2 sweet yellow onion, diced
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 jalapeño, minced
- 3/4 cup white American cheese, shredded
- 1/2 cup pepper jack cheese, shredded
- 1 cup Prairie Farms® whole milk
- 1 (4 oz.) can green chilies
- 1 medium tomato, diced
- 2 Tbsp fresh cilantro, chopped
- Salt, to taste
- Ground black pepper, to taste





Queso Dip

DIRECTIONS:

1. In a large skillet, heat oil over medium heat. Sauté onions until soft, about 5 minutes. Add garlic and jalapeño, sauté until fragrant, about 1 minute.
2. Add cheese and milk, stirring frequently until melted. Stir in green chilies, tomato, and cilantro. Add salt and pepper to taste.
3. Serve immediately with tortilla chips.

*Recipe and photo courtesy of Prairie Farms®.
For more delicious dairy recipes, visit prairiefarms.com.*

