Tacos and Fajitas Basics

Quick · Serves a crowd · Serves 4

Ken's note: TBD

A master page: a steak marinade and a chicken marinade scaled for a family dinner, how to cook them, and a menu of fillings and toppings. Warm tortillas and let everyone build their own.

Ingredients

Steak marinade (about 1½ lb skirt, flank, or flap meat)

- ¼ cup lime juice
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 1½ Tbsp soy sauce
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp chili powder
- ½ tsp smoked paprika
- ½ tsp salt
- ¼ tsp black pepper
- ¼ cup chopped cilantro (optional)
- 1 Tbsp orange juice (optional)

Chicken marinade (about 2 lb chicken breast or thigh, sliced into ½-inch strips)

- ⅓ cup lime juice
- ⅓ cup olive oil
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 Tbsp soy sauce
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp chili powder
- ½ tsp smoked paprika
- ¾ tsp salt
- ¼ tsp black pepper
- ⅓ cup chopped cilantro (optional)
- 1 Tbsp orange juice (optional)

Method

1. Whisk together. Marinate the steak whole in a bag or dish in the fridge 4–8 hours; don't go past 8–12, or the lime starts turning the surface mushy. Take it out 20–30 minutes before cooking and pat dry.
2. Slice the chicken first (it tolerates the acid), marinate 4–8 hours (up to 24), and pat dry.

Notes

Cooking

- **Steak:** sear whole in a very hot skillet or on a hot grill 2–3 minutes per side, rest 5–10 minutes, and slice against the grain.
- **Chicken:** sear the strips in batches in a very hot skillet, so they brown instead of steaming.
- **Peppers and onions:** 2–3 sliced bell peppers and 1 sliced onion, cooked in a hot skillet with oil 6–8 minutes until charred at the edges. Salt at the end.
- Discard the marinade that touched raw meat, or boil it for several minutes first.

Other taco fillings (see these pages)

- Barbacoa Chuck Roast, Smoked Pulled Pork, Tacos de Carnitas, Costa Rican Pork Carnitas, Birria Tacos, Blackened Mahi Tacos, and Ropa Vieja.

Toppings and sides

- Warm corn tortillas (on a dry skillet, 20–30 seconds per side) or flour tortillas
- Guacamole, Cuban-Style Black Beans, Esquites, shredded cabbage, diced white onion, cilantro, lime, sliced radishes or jalapeños
- Green Sauce, Tracy's Salsa or Pico de Gallo (Sauces), sour cream, crumbled cotija