



Grilled Tomatillo Salsa

Learn how tomatillos can make a fresh salsa for your next special gathering.

The tart, almost citrusy flavor of the tomatillo tempers with cooking. Below, grilling tomatillos over an open flame to produce charred skins gives this salsa a woody, smoky undertone, while brief stovetop cooking helps the flavors of all the ingredients meld together.

Tomatillos are high in a pectin-like substance, so sauces made with them thicken slightly when refrigerated.

Tomatillos also vary widely in flavor, with some being intensely sour. If that's the case, add a teaspoon or two of sugar to mellow the acidity in the salsa below.

When picking tomatillos or selecting them at a market, choose firm, bright green fruits with tightly attached husks. Tomatillos begin to yellow as they move past their prime ripeness.

Ingredients

- 1 lb. tomatillos
- 1/3 cup water
- 1/2 cup sweet white onion, diced
- 1 T. minced fresh garlic
- 1 hot pepper, seeds and membranes removed, minced (optional)
- 1/2 cup chopped fresh cilantro
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. cumin

Preparation

Tomatillos: Peel off the husks and rinse well; pat dry with a paper towel (do not peel the green skin or remove the seeds). Prepare a very hot gas or charcoal grill (low heat will turn the tomatillos mushy before charring the skins). Grill the whole tomatillos, turning frequently, until skins are blackened, about 3 to 5 minutes. Remove from grill. When cool enough to handle, remove the stems and stem base and slice in half.

Salsa: Place the grilled tomatillo halves and the water in a blender or food processor; puree until smooth. Pour mixture into a medium-sized saucepan and add the remaining ingredients. Stir well to combine, and heat over medium-high heat to a gentle boil, stirring occasionally to prevent scorching. Cook, stirring occasionally, until onions just begin to become translucent but are still somewhat crisp, about 5 to 8 minutes. Chill before serving with your favorite corn chips. Makes about 2 cups.