



**TEST KITCHEN TIP**

Use a thick fish like halibut for best results. If using a thinner, tender fish such as catfish or tilapia, place fish on greased foil, then place on grate. There's no need to turn the fish, and the foil will contain fillets that tend to fall apart.

# new twists on fish tacos

LEGENDS OF THE FIRST FISH TACO begin in Baja, Mexico, where surfers hung ten and then hung out at taquerías. There, cooks combined line-caught fish with local ingredients like fresh corn tortillas and zesty pico de gallo. It didn't take long for the fish taco craze to migrate to Southern California, where variations continue to

evolve. On the opposite coast, in Corolla, North Carolina, Bad Bean Taqueria's chef/owner, Rob Robinson, takes Southern flavors south of the border, such as in his Fish Tacos with Jicama-Cilantro Coleslaw (page 108). Guests love customizing their meal on a taco bar, he says. "If you're having fun and enjoying the food, it's a success."

## Smoked Fish Tacos with Caribbean Salsa

**PREP:** 30 minutes

**COOK:** 10 minutes

Hickory or alderwood chips

2 pounds firm whitefish fillets

2 tablespoons olive oil

½ teaspoon salt

½ teaspoon freshly ground pepper

12 (6½-inch) flour or red chile tortillas

Caribbean Salsa (recipe below)

Garnishes: thinly sliced red cabbage, thinly sliced red onion, fresh cilantro leaves, lime wedges

1. Soak hickory chips in water to cover at least 30 minutes; drain. Wrap chips in heavy-duty aluminum foil; poke several holes in foil. Set aside.
2. Brush fillets with oil; sprinkle with salt and pepper.
3. Light gas or charcoal grill; place foil-wrapped chips directly on hot coals on 1 side. Coat grill rack on opposite side with cooking spray, and place on grill. Let grill preheat 10 to 15 minutes or until wood chips begin smoking.
4. Grill fillets, covered with lid, over medium heat (325° to 350°) 5 minutes on each side or until fish flakes with a fork.
5. Wrap flour tortillas in heavy-duty aluminum foil. Place on grill during last 5 minutes of cooking time to warm. Serve immediately with Caribbean Salsa. Garnish, if desired. Makes 6 servings.

## Caribbean Salsa

**PREP:** 10 minutes

1 ripe mango, peeled and diced

1 cup diced fresh pineapple

1 cup diced papaya

2 tablespoons minced red onion

1 teaspoon jerk seasoning

2 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro

2 teaspoons fresh lime juice

¼ teaspoon salt (optional)

¼ teaspoon freshly ground pepper

Combine all ingredients; cover and chill. Makes 3 cups. >

#### TEST KITCHEN TIP

Prepare more-labor-intensive Grilled Corn Salsa first; you can make it earlier in the day without the avocado. Just before serving, stir in avocado and taste to see if it needs more salt.



## Shrimp Tacos with Grilled Corn Salsa

**PREP:** 8 minutes

**MARINATE:** 30 minutes

**COOK:** 10 minutes

- 1 pound large shrimp, peeled and deveined
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 2 teaspoons fresh lime juice
- 1 tablespoon Mexican or taco seasoning mix
- 8 flour or corn tortillas
- 2 cups thinly shredded cabbage

**Grilled Corn Salsa (recipe below)**

**1.** Combine first 4 ingredients in a bowl. Cover and let stand 30 minutes.

**2.** Grill, covered with grill lid, over medium-high heat (400°) 2 to 3 minutes on each side or until shrimp turn pink.

**3.** Wrap tortillas in foil; grill until warm.

**4.** Assemble tacos with tortillas, cabbage, and shrimp. Top with Grilled Corn Salsa. Makes 4 servings.

## Grilled Corn Salsa

**PREP:** 5 minutes

**COOK:** 12 minutes

**COOL:** 5 minutes

- 4 ears fresh corn, shucked
- ½ teaspoon lime zest
- ¼ cup fresh lime juice
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 small jalapeño chile, minced
- ½ teaspoon ground cumin
- ¾ teaspoon salt
- 1 avocado, diced

**1.** Grill corn, covered with grill lid, over medium-high heat (400°) 12 to 15 minutes or until browned on all sides, turning occasionally. Remove from grill; cool.

**2.** Cut corn from cob into a bowl; stir in lime zest and next 5 ingredients. Fold in avocado. Makes 2 cups. >



## Fish Tacos with Jicama-Cilantro Coleslaw

**PREP:** 5 minutes

**MARINATE:** 8 hours

**COOK:** 10 minutes

1 lime

2 tablespoons ground cumin

3 tablespoons canola oil

2½ pounds mahi-mahi, cut into 2-ounce pieces

24 taco-size corn or flour tortillas

Jicama-Cilantro Coleslaw (recipe at right)

Fire-roasted Tomatillo-and-Poblano Salsa (recipe at right)

Garnish: sliced radishes

**1.** Grate rind from lime, and squeeze juice to measure 3 tablespoons. Place rind and juice in a 1-gallon zip-top freezer bag. Add cumin and oil. Seal bag, and shake to combine. Add fish to marinade. Reseal bag, and turn to coat fish. Chill several hours.

**2.** Heat a large cast-iron or nonstick skillet over medium-high heat until hot. Add fish, and cook 10 minutes or until browned on all sides. Remove each piece of fish from skillet when it is done. (Do not overcook.) Break fish into smaller chunks.

**3.** Toast tortillas on both sides in a large skillet over medium heat while fish cooks. Cover tortillas, and keep warm.

**4.** Spoon fish into tortillas; top with Jicama-Cilantro Coleslaw and Fire-roasted Tomatillo-and-Poblano Salsa. Garnish, if desired. Makes 8 servings.

## Jicama-Cilantro Coleslaw

**PREP:** 12 minutes

**MARINATE:** 30 minutes

- 1 large jicama, peeled and cut into julienne strips
- 1 head green cabbage, cored and finely shredded
- 2 teaspoons sugar
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 1 lime
- 1 tablespoon ground cumin
- ½ teaspoon ground cayenne pepper
- 1 cup mayonnaise
- 1 large bunch fresh cilantro, coarsely chopped (about 1 cup)

**1.** Toss first 4 ingredients in a large bowl. Let stand, covered, 30 minutes.

**2.** Grate rind from lime, and squeeze juice to measure 3 tablespoons. Stir together rind, juice, cumin, cayenne, and mayonnaise in a small bowl. Add to cabbage mixture, and toss well. Toss in cilantro. Makes 8 cups.

## Fire-roasted Tomatillo-and-Poblano Salsa

**PREP:** 10 minutes

**COOK:** 25 minutes

**COOL:** 30 minutes

*This salsa is excellent with fish tacos but also simply with tortilla chips. For a milder flavor, seed the jalapeños.*

- 4 small poblano chiles, halved lengthwise
- 2 jalapeño chiles, stems removed and halved lengthwise
- 24 fresh tomatillos, husks removed
- 2 tablespoons canola oil, divided
- 4 garlic cloves, coarsely chopped
- 1 white onion, quartered
- 1 teaspoon ground coriander
- 2 small bunches fresh cilantro, trimmed and coarsely chopped
- 1 teaspoon salt

**1.** Place peppers and tomatillos on a large rimmed baking sheet. Drizzle with 1 tablespoon oil, turning to coat with a wide spatula. Place peppers cut side down, and broil vegetables 15 minutes or until charred, turning tomatillos but not peppers. Remove from oven; set aside.

**2.** Combine garlic and onion in a food processor; process until finely chopped.

**3.** Heat a large nonstick skillet over medium heat; add remaining 1 tablespoon oil. Add onion mixture. Cover and cook 6 minutes or until translucent, stirring often. Stir in coriander, and cook 10 seconds.

**4.** Process pepper, tomatillo, and accumulated juices in food processor until finely chopped; stir into onion mixture, and add 1½ cups water. Bring mixture to a boil; reduce heat, and simmer 10 minutes. Stir in cilantro and salt. Cool completely; cover and chill.

Makes 6 cups. >

*These three recipes were developed by Rob Robinson of the Bad Bean Taqueria.*



MEXICAN

ISLAND

CENTRAL AMERICAN

### ***take one down ...***

Bob Skilnik, author of *Does My Butt Look Big in This Beer? Nutritional Values of 2,000 Worldwide Beers* (Gambrinus, 2009), suggests the brews above as accompaniments for these delicious fish tacos. "You can't go wrong by pairing a light dish, even with some biting salsa, with indigenous beers of the southern regions," he says. A slice of lime is, of course, optional. If you want to serve lime wedges with some authenticity, seek out the tiny *limones* in a Hispanic grocery, and simply quarter them. For more tips, visit [mybeerbutt.com](http://mybeerbutt.com).



# Beer-battered Salmon Tacos with Chipotle Crema

**PREP:** 10 minutes

**COOK:** 20 minutes

- 8 corn tortillas
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon sea salt
- 1 teaspoon coarsely ground pepper
- 1 cup beer, room temperature

Vegetable oil

- 1 pound salmon fillets, cut into pieces

Chipotle Crema (recipe at right)

Garnishes: lime wedges, shredded cabbage, chopped fresh cilantro

1. Wrap tortillas in foil, and bake at 200° for 10 to 15 minutes or until warm.
2. Combine flour and next 3 ingredients in a large, shallow bowl. Let stand 5 minutes.
3. Heat 1 inch oil in a 10-inch heavy pot (2 to 3 inches deep) over moderate heat until a deep-fat thermometer registers 360°.
4. Dip fish into batter to coat, draining excess. Fry fish in batches, turning once, 4 to 5 minutes or until golden. Drain on paper towels.

5. Assemble tacos with warm tortillas, fish, and Chipotle Crema. Garnish, if desired. Makes 4 servings.

## Chipotle Crema

**PREP:** 5 minutes

- 8 ounces sour cream or crema Mexicana
- ½ teaspoon lime zest
- 2 tablespoons fresh lime juice
- 1 to 2 teaspoons minced chipotle chiles in adobo sauce
- ½ teaspoon ground cumin
- ¼ teaspoon salt

Combine all ingredients in a small bowl.

Makes 1 cup. 🌿

## *tips for your best taco bar*

Rob Robinson, chef/owner of the Bad Bean Taqueria in Corolla, North Carolina, offers pre-party advice. ■ Choose good tortillas and various fresh ingredients and homemade salsas. ■ Keep tortillas in a warmer or a 200° oven, or cover with a warm cotton cloth. ■ Put bowls of salsa out early so the mix warms to room temperature and has the boldest flavor. ■ Press plastic wrap on top of guacamole before serving to prevent browning. ■ Do not precook fish; grill and sear it just before serving. ■ Offer plenty of fresh lemon and lime wedges to garnish tacos, salsas, and drinks.

## Kick it up!

Add color and spice to your fish taco dinner with Tumaró's Gourmet Organic Flour Tortillas (\$3.49), available at [tumaros.com](http://tumaros.com) or natural food stores nationwide.

Our favorite choice? Jalapeño and Cilantro.