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Cooking Up Memories with Alex Guarnaschelli



Chicken and Black Bean Quesadillas

I feel like this is the type of recipe that is in every chef's blood. It's universally considered delicious and so easy to make. One thing I learned only recently: if your tortillas are a little dry around the edges, drop them in cool water for only an instant and then sear them (or grill them). That little quickie "water bath" helps to moisten them and make your quesadillas all that much better...If you like spicy, leave the seeds in the jalapeño and use a spicy hot sauce...You can use flour tortillas in place of the corn. You can also use 8 larger tortillas to make 4 large quesadillas. Have fun with condiments to go with these. From sour cream to guacamole to a hot sauce "bar", there are many fun options for this dish to be interactive. Don't like spice? Omit the chili powder.

Yield: 4-6 servings

Ingredients

The chicken:

- 1 tablespoon Giant Eagle Canola oil (plus 3-4 additional tablespoons for cooking the assembled quesadillas)
- 2 medium chicken breasts (total weight: 12-14 ounces)
- Market District Mediterranean Kosher salt

Black Bean Mix:

- 6 scallions, minced, green and white parts both
- 4 large cloves garlic, thinly sliced
- Kosher salt
- 1-pint cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1 1/2 teaspoons Giant Eagle chili powder
- 1 can (15.5 ounces) cooked Giant Eagle black beans, drained
- 2 tablespoons Giant Eagle red wine vinegar

The Quesadillas:

- 12 medium Giant Eagle flour tortillas OR corn tortillas
- 1 1/2 to 1 3/4 cups shredded Monterey jack cheese,
- 1/2 cup fresh cilantro leaves



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Step-by-step

- 1. Cook the chicken breasts:** Season the chicken breasts with Market District Mediterranean Kosher salt. In a medium sauté pan, heat 1 tablespoon of the Giant Eagle Canola oil until it smokes lightly. Add the chicken breasts in a single layer and cook, over medium heat, on their first side until golden brown, 3-5 minutes. Turn on their second side and cook 5-8 additional minutes or until cooked through. The internal temperature of chicken in the thickest part of the breast should register 165 degrees on a meat thermometer. Remove from the pan and transfer to a cutting board to rest.
- 2. Make the black bean spread:** In the same sauté pan where you cooked the chicken, add the scallions and garlic. Season with a pinch of Market District Mediterranean Kosher salt and cook over medium heat until they become tender, 2-3 minutes. Add the tomatoes and Giant Eagle chili powder and cook until tomatoes break down a little, 5-8 minutes. Stir in the Giant Eagle black beans and Giant Eagle Red Wine vinegar and cook 2-3 minutes more until the vinegar cooks down, gently pressing on the beans with the back of a spoon to crush and mix with the tomatoes. Taste for seasoning.
- 3. Assemble the quesadillas:** Slice the chicken breasts into thin slices. Arrange 6 Giant Eagle flour tortillas on a baking sheet and spread each with about 2 tablespoons of the bean mix. Sprinkle about 1/2 of the total cheese on top and press a layer of the chicken slices onto the bean mix to make it stick. Top with all of the remaining cheese and some more of the black bean filling. Press the remaining 6 tortillas on top of the filling. Top with another baking sheet and gently press down to flatten the filling and make the quesadillas sturdy. Refrigerate for at least 30 minutes and up to 6 hours.



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Step-by-step

4. Preheat the oven to 375°F.
5. **Cook the quesadillas:** In a large sauté pan heat 1 tablespoon of the Giant Eagle canola oil until it smokes lightly. Add 2 quesadillas, side-by-side, and brown on the first side, 2-3 minutes. Use a metal spatula to flip them on their second side. Cook for an additional 2-3 minutes and place the pan in the oven. Cook 5-8 minutes to assure the meat is hot in the center. Transfer to a flat surface. Repeat with the remaining quesadillas in batches of 2. Alternatively, cook them all in a single layer on a large griddle or 2-3 skillets and transfer to a baking sheet to warm in the oven.
6. **Serve:** Cut each quesadilla into quarters, season with salt and arrange on individual plates or a large serving platter. Sprinkle with the cilantro leaves. Serve with any of the following on the side: salsa, sour cream, sliced jalapeños, pickled jalapeños.

