

## Bayless' Sopa Azteca

So, the store was running a special in their smokehouse selections and when Mike brought home two pounds instead of 1 pound of the pulled chicken for pulled chicken sliders with slaw and I needed to come up with something for the remainder of the chicken, since it was not highly BBQ seasoned it would work in a lot of recipes including Mexican chicken tortilla soup like Rick Bayless' recipe for Sopa Azteca...perfect for a potluck dinner. Of course, you can use any tortilla soup recipe, but this is for the week's cooking club contribution. Very good by the way and I don't like a lot of stuff in the soup as in garnishes of sour cream, cheese, but I did add roasted corn, cilantro and a drizzle of hot sauce to my bowl. Check out the link for Rick's recipe over at Frontera and make your own adjustments if you like.

### Ingredients:

- 1 large dried pasilla (negro) chile, stemmed and seeded
- 1-15-ounce can diced tomatoes in juice (preferably fire-roasted)
- 2 tablespoons vegetable or olive oil
- 1 medium white onion sliced 1/4-inch thick
- 3 garlic cloves, peeled
- 2 quarts chicken broth
- 1 large epazote sprig, if you have one, I didn't that
- 2 cup shredded, cooked rotisserie chicken
- 1 large ripe avocado, pitted, flesh scooped from the skin and cut into 1/4-inch cubes
- 1 1/2 cups (6 ounces) shredded Mexican melting cheese (like Chihuahua, quesadilla or asadero) or Monterey Jack, brick or mild cheddar
- A generous 4 cups (about 6 ounces) roughly broken tortilla chips (I used crispy toasted tortilla strips)
- 1/2 cup Mexican crema, sour cream or creme fraîche for garnish
- 1 large lime wedges, for serving

Quickly toast the chile by turning it an inch or two above an open flame for a few seconds until its aroma fills the kitchen. (Lacking an open flame, toast it in a dry pan over medium heat, pressing it flat for a few seconds, then flipping it over and pressing it again.) Break the chile into pieces and put in a blender jar along with the tomatoes with their juice. (A food processor will work, though it won't completely puree the chile.)

Heat the oil in a medium (4-quart) saucepan over medium-high. Add the onion and garlic and cook, stirring frequently, until golden, about 7 minutes. Scoop up the onion and garlic with a slotted spoon, pressing them against the side of the

pan to leave behind as much oil as possible, and transfer to the blender. Process until smooth.

Return the pan to medium-high heat. When quite hot, add the puree and stir nearly constantly, until thickened to the consistency of tomato paste, about 6 minutes. Add the broth and epazote, if using. Reduce the heat to medium-low and simmer for 15 minutes. Taste and season with salt, usually about a generous teaspoon (depending on the saltiness of the broth).

Just before serving, add the chicken to the simmering broth. Divide the avocado, cheese and tortilla chips between serving bowls. When the chicken is done, usually about 5 minutes, ladle the soup into the bowls. Garnish with the crema. Pass the lime separately.

<http://www.rickbayless.com/recipe/sopa-azteca/>