



Howard Hillman's Great Peasant Dishes of the world

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hillmanwonders.com

huevos rancheros

Mexico

It originated as a peasant dish. Today, it is a popular national specialty.

Pronunciation

weh'-vos rahn-cheh'-rohs

Part 1 Recipe

■ Ingredients

Servings: 2

- **Lard**
60 milliliters or 4 tablespoons
- **White onions**
Thinly sliced
6 centiliters or 1/4 cup
- **Minced garlic**
5 milliliters or 1 teaspoon
- **Chopped tomatoes**
15 centiliters or 2/3 cup
- **Green chili pepper**
1 medium sized
cut into julienne strips
- **Ground cumin**
1 milliliter or 1/4 teaspoon
- **Salt**
1/2 milliliter or 1/8 teaspoon
- **Corn tortillas**
2 medium sized
- **Eggs**
2 large

■ Steps

- 1** Preheat oven to 90°C or 200°F.
- 2** Melt 15 milliliters or 1 tablespoon of the lard in a thick-bottomed 1 to 2 liter (or 1 to 2 quart) saucepan over low to moderate heat.
- 3** Sauté the onions for 2 minutes, stirring frequently. Add the garlic and sauté the mixture for 1 minute, stirring constantly.
- 4** Stir in the tomatoes, chili, cumin, and salt. Simmer the sauce, uncovered, for 20 minutes, stirring frequently.
- 5** Melt the remaining lard in a heavy bottomed, medium-sized skillet over moderate heat. Fry a tortilla in the fat for about 30 seconds per side. Transfer it to paper towels, pat it dry, and place it in the preheated oven. Prepare the other tortilla in the same fashion.
- 6** Reduce the heat in the skillet to low and wait a couple of minutes for the fat to cool slightly. Fry one of the eggs in the fat until the whites are just set. Transfer the egg to a warm platter, cover it with foil, and fry the second egg in the same manner.
- 7** Place a tortilla on each of two warm dinner plates. Place a fried egg on each tortilla. Spoon the sauce over the eggs. Serve promptly.

Part 2 Cooking tips

■ Pointers

- **Cooking oil** – If lard is unavailable, substitute 50 milliliters (3 tablespoons) of vegetable oil and 15 milliliters (1 tablespoon) of butter.
- **Tomatoes** - If vine-ripened tomatoes are unavailable, use a good brand of imported plum tomatoes.
- **Sautéing** - Do not sauté the onions and garlic at too high a heat or for too long. Otherwise, they will burn and develop a bitter taste.
- **Chili peppers** - When handling them, do not touch your eyes. Wash the knife blade and work surface thoroughly when you have completed the cutting task.
- **Chili hotness** - If you want your sauce to be hotter, add the chili seeds.
- **Tortillas** - Do not overcook the tortillas in step 9 or they will become crisp and brittle.
- **Egg whites** - In step 6, the fat must not be too hot or the egg whites will develop a rubbery texture.

■ Serving suggestions

- **Meal** - Huevos rancheros are usually eaten for breakfast or brunch.
 - **Avocado** - Garnish your dish with sliced fresh avocado.
 - **Side dishes** - Accompany your huevos rancheros with refried beans, queso blanco or another soft and mild cheese, whole chili peppers, sausage, and fresh tortillas.
 - **Beverage** - Hot chocolate is a popular accompaniment.
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■ Variations

- **Flavoring agents** - Experiment with different ones for the tomato sauce - fresh coriander leaves, for instance.
 - **Twice the eggs** - Prepare and serve two eggs on top of each tortilla. In this case, fry the eggs together so that they form the necessary round shape.
 - **Cooking method** - Use poached or scrambled rather than fried eggs.
 - **Final touches** - Just before you serve your huevos rancheros, sprinkle them with some melting cheese and run the (heat proof) platter briefly under the broiler.
 - **Sauce location** - Rather than spooning the sauce over the middle of the egg, add it around the circumference of the egg.
 - **Platter** - Instead of serving the huevos rancheros on dinner plates, bring them to the table on a large warm serving platter.
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Part 3

Travelog

I lived half a year of my childhood in San Miguel de Allende, a peaceful Mexican town built on the slope of a hill overlooking an expansive valley. At that time, San Miguel wasn't

the tourist mecca it is today, but the first wave of expatriate artists with palettes and suitcases in hand was already arriving in appreciable numbers.

Their "Motif Number One" consisted of the numerous Spanish Colonial buildings that lined the quaint and winding cobblestone streets. They also took time to dab on their canvases the image of my favorite local edifice: a somewhat eccentric pink stone church steeple designed by an Indian architect who had used etchings of French cathedrals as his reference material. The result of his composition is described as Mexican Gothic.

I also enjoyed San Miguel's countryside. My family lived in a home near the outskirts of San Miguel and frequently took horseback rides through the nearby hills, exploring ranches, farms, and wide-open country. It was in this environment that I was introduced to the spicy country-style eggs called huevos rancheros.

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