

Seasonal Eating
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Taco Tuesday Takes a Twist with Peppers and Onions
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My family has eaten Southwest/Mexican style food for as long as I can remember. We had tacos, enchiladas, tostadas and chile rellenos before they became popular fare in the United States. I remember my Grandfather (a mid-western meat and potatoes man) thinking we were feeding him dog food the first time we served him refried beans in the 1970's. I also remember my Dad coming home with tortillas in his suitcase when he went to San Antonio on business trips, before they were commonly available nationwide.

Fajitas are a more recent addition to our "Taco Tuesday" rotation of menus that I learned to make shortly out of college. I love the colorful peppers along with onions and chicken or steak. I like to use both green and red peppers for the beautiful color and if you like a little



heat, you can throw in a little sliced jalapeno. The secret is in the marinade for these components. I have used several different ones, but this is my favorite. I usually marinate the vegetables in one bag and the meat in another so the vegetables don't get soaked in raw meat juices. After draining off the marinade though, I cook them together in the pan until the meat is cooked through and the vegetables are just tender. You can substitute steak for the chicken in the recipe below or use a mixture of both.

There are several options for heating the flour tortillas. You can throw them one at a time in a dry pan to slightly brown in spots and heat through or you can heat them in the microwave for a few seconds or wrap in foil and heat in the oven. Fill your tortilla with the meat and vegetable mixture and then top however you like – with cheese, sour cream, cilantro, salsa, etc. – I usually just do a few sprigs of cilantro and a little sour cream, letting the flavor of the marinade shine through.

The same marinated meat and vegetable mixture can also be used to make quesadillas. Place a flour tortilla in a pan greased with a little oil. Top half of the tortilla with cooked fajita mixture and shredded cheese (Monterey Jack and/or Cheddar) and then fold un-topped half over the filling. Cook until the bottom is browned and then flip over and cook until other side is browned and the cheese is melted. Top with salsa and sour cream for a great dinner.

Early fall is a great time for peppers, both sweet bell and spicy chile peppers. So marinate some peppers, onion and meat for a new twist on your "Taco Tuesday".

Visit the Bedford County Extension website for more recipes and information about seasonal eating (bedford.tennessee.edu).

Chicken Fajitas

1/4 cup soy sauce
1/4 cup red wine vinegar
2 tablespoons light corn syrup
1/2 teaspoon Tabasco sauce
1/4 teaspoon black pepper
1 teaspoon dried oregano
1 teaspoon dried thyme
2 tablespoons minced fresh cilantro
1 1/4 pounds chicken breasts, sliced thinly
1 green bell pepper, sliced thinly
1 red bell pepper, sliced thinly
1 yellow onion, sliced thinly
Vegetable oil
6 flour tortillas
Toppings as desired

In a bowl, whisk together soy sauce, vinegar, corn syrup, Tabasco sauce, pepper, oregano, thyme and cilantro. Add chicken to one gallon size zip-top bag and add half of the soy sauce mixture. Add the bell pepper and onion to another bag and the remaining mixture. Seal the bags and turn to coat ingredients. Place in a bowl or pan and marinate in the refrigerator for several hours or overnight. In a large frying pan, heat about a tablespoon of vegetable oil. Drain off marinade and discard. Add meat and vegetables to hot pan. Stir and cook just until chicken is done and vegetables are slightly softened. Heat tortillas as desired and fill with cooked mixture. Top with cilantro, cheese, sour cream, salsa, etc. as desired.