

SALSA FOR WIMPS

In honor of Cinco de Mayo, here's a fun recipe from my book, GETTING SAUCED. I had the great pleasure of working with Susan Feniger and Mary Sue Milliken on a special for Food Network. While we were scouting, Susan took me down to the Grand Central Market in downtown LA and insisted I buy up every dried chili I could fit in my suitcase. When I got back home, I tried one of their salsa recipes, but idiotically mistook habaneros for chili de arbol. It was so hot, it nearly blew my head off. Eventually I got the dish right, but as the years have passed, I can't take the heat as well as I used to, so here's a much milder version.

INGREDIENTS

$\frac{1}{2}$ pound Italian Roma tomatoes

$\frac{1}{2}$ pound tomatillos, husked and washed

1 medium sweet onion

2 Tablespoons olive oil

3 garlic cloves, crushed

$\frac{1}{3}$ small can chipotles in adobo sauce, chopped

1 cup water

1 teaspoon salt

$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

$\frac{1}{2}$ bunch cilantro, leaves only, roughly chopped

PREPARATION

Preheat broiler. With a sharp knife, lightly pierce the skin on the tomatoes and tomatillos by making an "X" on each end.

Quarter the onion. Drizzle with olive oil and season with salt and pepper. Place all on a baking sheet and broil, turning occasionally until charred, 10 to 12 minutes. Set aside to cool for ten minutes.

Peel the tomatoes and tomatillos. Rough chop the tomatoes, tomatillos, and onions.

In a saucepan, heat the oil, then add garlic and cook for one minute until fragrant. Add in tomatoes, tomatillos, onion, the chipotles in adobo sauce, water, salt, and black pepper.

Bring to a boil and then simmer for 10 minutes. Turn off heat and let cool for 10 minutes.

Transfer to a food processor or blender. Puree and strain. Fold in the cilantro. Serve at room temperature or slightly chilled. The salsa can be stored in the refrigerator for 3 to 5 days, or frozen for weeks.