

CRAB QUESADILLAS WITH AVOCADO SALAD serves 2-3

Cooking the quesadillas will take all your attention, so make the avocado salad first and cover it with plastic wrap right up against the vegetables. You can refrigerate it for no more than an hour or two or do the tastier thing and just leave it at room temperature if you're eating fairly soon.

AVOCADO SALAD

- 1 cup diced cucumber
- ½ yellow or red bell pepper, diced
- 1 large diced ripe tomato
- 2 ripe diced avocados
- 4 tablespoons minced fresh cilantro
- 1/4 cup thinly sliced red onion
- 1 minced clove garlic
- Juice of 1 lime
- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- Generous pinch each: kosher salt, freshly ground black pepper, crushed red pepper

Toss everything together very gently in a medium bowl. You don't want guacamole, but rather want each element to be seen and tasted individually bound together with the lime and oil. Taste and adjust for seasonings. Cover well and refrigerate or leave on counter if you're making the quesadillas right away.

CRAB QUESADILLAS

I made 6 small quesadillas here. If you use larger than 6 1/2 inch tortillas, you'll have fewer quesadillas.

- 6 ounces lump crab meat, picked over for shells
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
- Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper
- 2 tablespoons each: minced green onion, minced red bell pepper, minced zucchini, minced fresh parsley
- Oil (neutral-tasting such as vegetable or grapeseed) and salted butter
- 6 - 6 1/2-inch whole wheat tortillas
- 6 ounces sliced fresh mozzarella, each slice cut in half into moons

- 2 ounces grated Cheddar cheese (1/2 cup grated or to taste)
- Lime wedges, garnish
- 1 cup Salsa Ranch Sauce (see below)
- 1/2 cup Sour Cream, optional, for garnish

In a medium bowl, mix together crab, lemon juice, a pinch each of salt and pepper, along with the green onion, minced red bell pepper, zucchini, and parsley.

Heat a 10-inch cast-iron skillet over medium high heat with a tablespoon each butter and oil. Place one tortilla into pan and spoon enough filling onto one half to cover well. Lay 2 half-moons of mozzarella on top of the crab mixture and sprinkle with a little grated Cheddar. Fold other half of tortilla over onto the filling and cheeses so that you have a half-moon shape. Repeat with a second quesadilla if you like or just cook one at a time if that's easier. Turn when brown and bubbly--after about 2 minutes-- add a tiny pinch of salt and pepper to the outside of the quesadilla, and let cook another minute or so on the other side until golden.

Repeat process, adding more oil and butter as needed, until you've finished making the quesadillas. *You'll probably have to scrape out some burned bits and watch both the pan and heat carefully to avoid burning the sandwiches and the pan.*

Remove each quesadilla carefully to a plate. Drizzle with Salsa Ranch Sauce and a teaspoon of sour cream, if using. Garnish with lime, green onion and/or parsley. Serve hot or warm with a side of avocado salad.

COOK'S NOTE: If you'd like to make all of the quesadillas at once, preheat your oven to 200 degrees Fahrenheit and place a parchment paper-lined baking sheet at the center. Remove each quesadilla to the sheet as it's done and it will keep warm until you've finished cooking. Caution: you may have cheese sneaking and oozing out of those kept in the oven.

SALSA RANCH SAUCE: Mix half cup each salsa and ranch dressing. Add a drop or two of hot sauce if you like spicy.

DRINKS: A white sangria or a light, icy-cold beer such as **Dos Equis**.

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