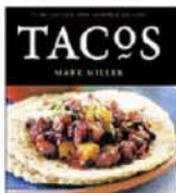


# lookout food



## mixed media

### Mouth of the Border

→ Tasty Mexican street snacks are lofted to top culinary status in Mark Miller's new cookbook, **TACOS** (\$22; 10 SPEED PRESS). Featuring 75 recipes — from traditional combos such as ham, cheese and egg to elegant pairings such as lobster and avocado — the exhaustive but easy-to-follow book also includes insightful commentary on the dishes' origins and tantalizing asides from Miller's experiences living in Mexico. Among our favorite parts is a newbie-aimed index on "ingredients and techniques" that teaches about such topics as different ways to cook chiles and flavorful extras such as achiote paste (a combination of various spices) and canela (Mexican cinnamon). **BETSY LOWTHER**

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# The Whole Enchilada

Dip, fill and roll your way to mastering this easy, cheesy Mexican favorite

Rolled, sauced and oozing with melted cheese, enchiladas could be called the Mexican equivalent of an American burger or an Italian lasagna: a familiar dish that nearly everyone likes to eat.

"Enchiladas are a great party dish because they're both recognizable and comforting," says Richard Sandoval, executive chef at Virginia's La Sandia (Tysons Corner

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→ Find recipes for chicken enchiladas and fresh tomatillo sauce from "Simply Mexican." | **ONLINE NOW**

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Center; 703-893-2222). "You can stuff them with anything: seafood, beef, shredded duck confit." That versatility — and the fact that you can prep them in advance — makes them ideal for a big fiesta.

"Enchilada" means "in-chilled" in Spanish. That means the cylindrical, tortilla-wrapped wonders get doused with some kind of chili sauce, be it ancho-rich red gravy, green tomatillo sauce or a smoky mole. "You're only as good as your sauce," says Lourdes Castro, author of "Simply Mexican" (\$25, Ten Speed Press). She likes taking the time to whip up a homemade one; other experts say store-bought versions from Latin markets or Trader Joe's work if time is short.

Fillings "can be anything you'd put in tacos," says D.C. cooking teacher Patricia Jinich, who runs classes at the Mexican Cultural Institute ([Portal.sre.gob.mx/imw](http://Portal.sre.gob.mx/imw)). "Eggs, shredded pork, picadillo [spiced ground beef]. Just keep in mind which sauce you are using. Lighter fillings like chicken are good with strong sauces like mole; heavy fillings are best with simpler



LOVE ENCHILADAS

**"Lighter fillings like chicken are good with strong sauces like mole; heavy fillings are best with simpler sauces like tomatillo."**

sauces like tomatillo."

Corn tortillas give enchiladas their toothsome lushness. But they've got to be softened — either by steam, a dunk in sauce or a dip in some hot oil. "I fry them gently after heating just enough oil to kiss the pan," says Daisy Martinez, star of the Food Network's "Viva Daisy," which debuts this summer.

Cheese, de rigeur in Tex-Mex enchiladas — and a nice garnish on traditional Mexican ones — also adds to the alchemy. Grated

cheddar or Monterey Jack is standard, "but if you go to a Latin market, you'll get more unusual ones that are saltier and tangier than American ones," Jinich says. Think Parmesan-ish queso anejo or fetta-like queso fresco; both should be crumbled on enchiladas just before serving.

Once ingredients are prepped, it's time to start filling and rolling. "It's best to be organized and have a sort of an assembly line," says Castro. That means tortillas go into the oil before being stuffed with about 1/4 cup of filling. Roll it and place it seam-side down on a plate (if the recipe doesn't require time in the oven) or baking dish.

"Enchiladas are hard to mess up," Martinez says. "Even if they don't look pretty, you can put them in a baking dish, and if all the ingredients are good, they'll still taste delicious." **JENNIFER BARGER (EXPRESS)**