

# My Life in Salsa

**F**irst, there was Pace Picante Sauce. Growing up in San Antonio, that hourglass-shaped bottle was a staple in our fridge. Then, a friend in high school with an entrepreneurial streak started bottling her own salsa. It was fresh and chunky, heaped by the spoonful atop slices of my dad's home-grown tomatoes for a summer snack.

Next, I fell in love with a salsa from our favorite Mexican food joint, El Milagrito. It was served heated with cheese melted in it. When the tattooed son of the owner brought it to your table, he'd growl, "Coming at you, hot and cheesy!"

My husband has made up a couple of mean batches, one with habaneros we grew in a metal washtub in full sun. They were vicious little orbs, and I couldn't eat it.

These days, I like a store-bought brand, Arriba. They make a medium-hot fire-roasted salsa that is the new staple in our fridge. But I aspire to salsa self-sufficiency. I want to make my own, to share it with neighbors, to have people ask for more. To this end, I went searching on the Internet for my perfect salsa recipe.

I like a simple, fresh salsa with all the requisite ingredients and the added zing of lemon juice or vinegar. I found the right mix in this Fresh Tomato Salsa, from a website called Texas Cooking Online ([texascooking.com](http://texascooking.com)). The website is an outstanding resource for recipes and cooking tips, but you'll also find excellent articles about Texas food products, wines and cooking traditions.

Who knows what salsas await me down the road? Happily, as a confirmed Texan, this condiment is my constant companion.

## Fresh Tomato Salsa

1 medium purple onion, chopped  
 3 green onions, chopped  
 1 large clove garlic, chopped  
 1-2 large fresh jalapeño peppers, seeded, chopped  
 ½ cup fresh cilantro leaves, chopped  
 1½ pounds ripe tomatoes, seeded, chopped  
 1-3 small cans of green chilies, depending upon taste  
 1 tablespoon olive oil

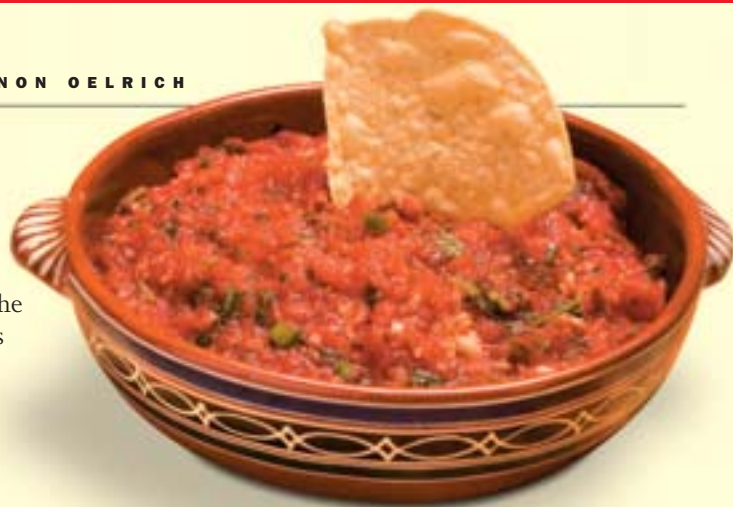
2 tablespoons fresh lime juice  
 ½ teaspoon salt  
 ¼ teaspoon ground cumin  
 1 teaspoon red wine vinegar  
 2 tablespoons tomato juice

Combine onions, garlic, jalapeño and cilantro in blender or food processor. Pulse until finely chopped, but not puréed.

Add tomatoes, canned chilies, oil, lime juice, salt, cumin, vinegar and tomato juice. Pulse until just chopped—not too smooth.

Correct seasonings, if necessary. Cover and refrigerate for about an hour before serving. Makes about 4 cups.

Serving size: ½ cup. Per serving: 50 calories, 1 gram protein, 2 grams fat, 8 grams carbohydrates, 158 milligrams sodium, 0 cholesterol



Most months, when we test recipes for this contest, we have to loosen our belts afterwards. This month was a nice break—it's pretty hard to fill up on salsa. Even so, an entire table was covered with bowls of salsa and bags of chips. We dipped and tasted over and over (no double dipping!), narrowing the field until we found our three winners.

**GEORGIA FULENWIDER** writes that her top prizewinning Salsa by George "is a favorite with my church, friends and family in Whitewright. I've been told our athletic director puts this salsa on everything he eats." We can see why! Georgia is a member of Grayson-Collin Electric Cooperative.

### Salsa by George

- 2 large cans (28 ounces each) whole tomatoes, or 16 fresh tomatoes
- 1 can (14 ounces) Rotel tomatoes and green chilies
- 1 small can (4 ounces) salsa verde
- 1 small can (4 ounces) green chilies, or 4 fresh roasted green chilies\*
- 3-4 chipotle peppers in adobo sauce (canned)
- 3-4 roasted jalapeño peppers
- 2-3 roasted habanero peppers (optional, for extra-hot salsa)
- 1 bunch fresh cilantro
- 6-8 whole garlic cloves
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 2 cans (14 ounces each) diced tomatoes with roasted garlic

In blender or food processor, blend whole tomatoes, Rotel, salsa verde, green chilies, all peppers, cilantro and garlic cloves. Pour into large bowl or gallon pitcher (great

for storage); add chopped onion and diced tomatoes. Mix well. Refrigerate at least 3 to 4 hours; serve with tortilla chips or your favorite Mexican dish. Yields 1 gallon.

\*To roast peppers: Place on foil or cookie sheet under oven broiler until skin blisters and browns; turn and roast all sides. When roasted, they give salsa a great smoky flavor.

Serving size:  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup. Per serving: 32 calories, 1 gram protein, trace fat, 7 grams carbohydrates, 40 milligrams sodium, trace cholesterol

### Slow Cooker Salsa

- 10-20 small or plum tomatoes, whole
- 4-8 cloves garlic, peeled
- 2-3 onions, quartered
- 2-3 jalapeño peppers
- $\frac{1}{2}$ -1 cup fresh cilantro or parsley
- $1\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoons salt
- Juice of  $\frac{1}{2}$  lime (optional)

Wash tomatoes (cut away any bruised spots or large cores) and place in slow cooker (enough tomatoes to fill 5-quart  $\frac{2}{3}$  full). Cut slit in 4 to 8 tomatoes; place garlic cloves inside tomatoes. Place onions on top of tomatoes. Cut stems off peppers and place on top of onions. Set on high and cook for  $2\frac{1}{2}$  to 3 hours (or cook on low for 5 to 6 hours), until vegetables are tender. Let cool.

In food processor or blender, layer cooled mixture with cilantro (or parsley) and blend well. Pour into bowl and add salt and lime. Mix well and pour into jars or other covered container. Chill before serving. Keep stored in refrigerator. Makes about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  to 2 quarts.

Serving size:  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup. Per serving: 20 calories,

1 gram protein, trace fat, 4 grams carbohydrates, 206 milligrams sodium, 0 milligrams cholesterol

**CAROL WISHARD**

Fannin County Electric Cooperative

### Grilled Salsa Verde

- 1 pound tomatillos, husked and quartered
- $\frac{1}{2}$  medium onion, cut in half
- 3 cloves garlic, peeled
- 4 serrano or 3 jalapeño peppers
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup cilantro, chopped
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon lard (or canola oil)
- 1 cup chicken broth (or water)

Preheat grill to high. Place vegetables on a vegetable grate or on skewers. It will take 4 to 6 minutes for all but onions. Remove to cutting board, and continue to cook onions about 6 minutes more. (For milder salsa, remove seeds from peppers.)

Place grilled vegetables, cilantro, sugar and salt in blender; process to coarse paste.

Heat lard in deep saucepan over medium heat. Add paste and cook until slightly darkened and thick, about 3 to 5 minutes. Stir in broth and simmer for about 6 minutes. If too thick, add more stock or water. Adjust salt and sugar if needed. Serve at room temperature. Leftovers will keep for 1 week in refrigerator. Yields 3 cups.

Serving size:  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup. Per serving: 66 calories, 2 grams protein, 3 grams fat, 8 grams carbohydrates, 489 milligrams sodium, 2 milligrams cholesterol

**NORA WHITTED**

Pedernales Electric Cooperative

## OCTOBER RECIPE CONTEST: VEGGIES FOR VEGGIE-HATERS



I'll admit, I like my veggies lightly steamed or sautéed, but I know plenty of people who won't let something green near their mouths unless it's been thoroughly camouflaged. We want recipes that make veggie-haters beg for more! Send your favorites to Home Cooking, 2550 S. IH-35, Austin, TX 78704. You may also fax them to (512) 486-6254 or e-mail them to [recipes@texas-ec.org](mailto:recipes@texas-ec.org). Be sure to include your name, address and phone number, as well as the name of your electric co-op. The deadline is July 10. The top winner will receive a prize from Pioneer. Others whose recipes are published will also receive a prize.