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Easy to Make Guacamole Dip

By Jan Kovarik

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Easy to Make Guacamole!

You can make guacamole that people will rave about! It's easy, and you don't need any fancy kitchen utensils or appliances.

What You'll Need To Have Ready

Assemble the following kitchen items: Cutting board Sharp knife A shallow-lipped dish or bowl, preferably with a flat bottom A potato masher, hand-held is better than an electric whipper

Ingredients (for one batch, feeds 2-4 people as a side dish or dip for chips): 2 Haas avocados* Fresh cilantro (usually comes in a small bunch or plastic bag in the produce area) 2 Roma tomatoes 2 fresh limes (not lime juice) Sour Cream (fat-free is OK) 1 package of Guacamole seasoning (Schilling, McCormick, or Lawry) Cumin (a spice) Your favorite salsa (homemade or favorite brand) Favorite tortilla chips

* Do not use green-skinned "Chilean" avocados. Haas (or "California") avocados have a very dark skin, almost brown, and the skin has a "wrinkled" appearance. To select avocados that are "ripe" (ready to use), pick up the avocado, hold it in your palm (like you are holding a ball), and squeeze very gently, but with some pressure. The avocado should "give" a little (that is, not feel solid or too firm). If it is "squishy" (really soft), then try another one. Don't buy too far ahead of time (I like to get them the day before). **DO NOT REFRIGERATE** prior to making the guacamole.

Making the Guacamole

1. Rinse the avocados. With a sharp knife, cut avocado in half. There is a very hard "seed" inside the avocado, so after you've sliced it all the way around, grasp the two halves and "twist" to pull apart. You

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can scoop out the seed with a spoon, then scoop avocado flesh out of the skin and put in the dish or bowl.

2. Pinch off several leaves from the tops of the cilantro and rinse. Trim off stems. Cut through the leaves many times until as finely minced as possible. Scrape into avocado.

NOTE: Cilantro is very potent. Start with just a little bit. After the guacamole has been completely mixed, taste test. If you need more "zest," then begin to add a little more cilantro and taste. Continue until you have the zesty flavor that is right for you!

3. Rinse the tomatoes. Cut in small pieces and then mince as finely as possible. Add to the avocado.

NOTE: I like to do the cilantro first, and then the tomatoes, without rinsing off the cutting board. This way, you can pick up all the cilantro flavoring that's still on the cutting board!

4. Cut one lime in half. Take one half and squeeze most of the juice into the avocado.

NOTE: Limes can be very strong, flavor-wise. Start with just half a lime. If you need more of a lime flavor, after making the guacamole, you can squeeze in a little more juice. Be careful! Don't add too much liquid to the guacamole or it will be too runny!

5. Spoon in a dollop of sour cream (about a soup-spoonful) into the avocado.

6. Open and empty the entire packet of guacamole seasoning into the avocado.

7. Add a "pinch" of cumin to the avocado.

NOTE: Cumin is a very strongly flavored spice. Add in just a little bit at a time until you have the right taste that's best for you.

8. Add a spoonful of salsa (about a soup-spoonful) to the avocado.

Now that you have all the ingredients in one bowl, begin to mash (with your potato masher). Continue mashing until almost all of the avocado has been mashed smooth (that is, mash until only little chunks of avocado are left, some avocado will be thoroughly mashed like mashed potatoes).

Taste, using a chip that you are going to serve with it. Depending on your personal preferences, you can now begin to add small amounts of cilantro, lime, and cumin until you have just the right zestiness! If you go overboard on any one ingredient, you can offset with little pinches of sugar (add in a pinch at a time, mix well, and taste), until you have the perfect flavor.

Provides enough dip for 2–4 people. If using as a side dish to tacos, burritos, or fajitas, you might want to double the recipe so that you have enough for the side dish and as a dip for chips.

When To Make and How To Store Your Guacamole

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You can make the guacamole ahead of time, although I recommend that you make it the same day that you are going to serve it.

Put freshly made guacamole in a glass dish or container, and refrigerate. If you are going to be refrigerating for more than 6 hours, add 1 teaspoon of reconstituted lemon juice, and mix in well. This will prevent the guacamole from turning brown.

When you are ready to serve, I suggest that you serve in a wooden bowl. Using a cut lime, smear the inside of the wooden bowl with just enough lime juice to wet the surface. Spoon in the guacamole.

For a festive touch, spoon a very small dollop of sour cream into the middle of the guacamole. Break off one or two leaves of cilantro, leaving enough stem so that you can push down into the sour cream (so that the cilantro leaves stand up). Then rim the outer edge of the guacamole with a little bit of freshly minced tomato.

Serve with chips or as a side dish to your favorite Mexican or Tex–Mex meal!

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What Do I Do With All These Packets Of DIP Mix?

By Nicole Dean

It seems that everyone uses dip mix but me. I've managed to accumulate quite the collection of dip mixes. (Ranch, jalapeno, Mexican, etc.)

What can I do with these other than make DIP?

Signed, Drowning in Dip

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Dear Drowning in Dip,

I hear you! I find myself in the same situation. But, I ended up with my pantry over-flowing in dip and finally found some solutions. I hope they help you, too.

All you need to use your dip mix is sour cream, mayonnaise or cream cheese. From there, the possibilities are endless.

Tuna to the Rescue: If you enjoy tuna sandwiches, but get tired of the boring standard of tuna and mayonnaise, then make some `fancy' mayonnaise. A few hours before you want your tuna sandwich, mix some mayonnaise and dip packet together. Let it sit. Then, when you want to enjoy your tuna sandwich, simple mix the `fancy mayonnaise' with your tuna - and you've got a winner.

Turkey Wrappers: Have cream cheese sitting around? Mix it with some dip and microwave for a few seconds. Then, get out a tortilla wrapper, pile some of the cream cheese and turkey slices on the wrapper and microwave for another few seconds. The cream cheese should be all smooshy and the wrapper will roll up nicely. Add fresh veggies or just enjoy as is.

Potato - A cheap, healthy meal: Mix a packet of dip mix with a container of sour cream (to taste). Let it sit for at least one hour. Microwave or bake your potato as you normally would. Then, top with cheese, veggies, leftovers, meat, beans, etc - and a dollop of your flavored sour cream. Voila!

Pasta Salad - Any noodle salad that pairs mayonnaise with noodles can be enhanced with dip mix. It's much cheaper than buying deli salads and it's very simple. All you need are noodles, mayonnaise, dip mix, veggies and meat. Try it. You'll love it!

So, use up those dusty dip packets and you just might find yourself becoming a fan of those little dip packets in your pantry.

Nicole Dean is a freelance writer and owner of

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to day cooking? Grab a free cookbook at

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