

Esquites

Authentic Mexican esquites recipe with charred corn, cotija cheese, lime, and chili powder. Easy street food salad ready in 25 minutes.

5 min

PREP

20 min

COOK

25 min

TOTAL

4

SERVINGS

Medium

DIFFICULTY

Ingredients

- 2 tbsp canola oil
- 4 cup corn
- 0.5 tsp salt
- 1 clove garlic
- 0.25 cup cilantro (coriander)
- 1 jalapeno pepper
- 2 tbsp mayonnaise
- 1 tbsp lime juice
- 1.5 tsp chili flakes
- 3 tbsp cotija cheese

Instructions

- 1 Char the corn**

Heat 2 tablespoons oil in a large cast-iron skillet over medium-high heat until the oil shimmers and moves freely when you tilt the pan, about 2-3 minutes.
- 2** Add 4 cups corn kernels to the hot skillet in a single layer. Cook without stirring for 4-5 minutes until golden brown spots develop on the bottom of the kernels.
- 3** Stir the corn and continue cooking for 8-10 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the kernels are charred in spots and smell toasted.
- 4** Add 1 clove minced garlic and cook for 30 seconds until fragrant. Remove the skillet from heat and let the corn cool for 3-4 minutes.

5 Assemble the esquites

Transfer the charred corn to a large mixing bowl. Add 1/4 cup chopped cilantro, 1 diced jalapeño, 2 tablespoons mayonnaise, 1 tablespoon lime juice, 1/2 teaspoon salt, and 1 1/2 teaspoons chili powder.

6 Toss all ingredients together until the corn is evenly coated with the mayonnaise mixture and the seasonings are distributed throughout.

7 Divide the esquites among 4 serving bowls and sprinkle generously with 3 tablespoons crumbled cotija cheese.

Tips

Use fresh corn whenever possible – the natural sugars create better caramelization and superior flavor compared to frozen varieties.

Don't stir the corn too frequently while charring; let it sit undisturbed for 3-4 minutes at a time to develop proper browning.

Toast whole cumin seeds and grind them fresh for an extra layer of flavor complexity in your chili powder blend.

Warm your serving bowls slightly before plating to help maintain the ideal serving temperature longer.

Reserve some cooking oil from charring the corn to drizzle over the finished dish for added richness and flavor.

Grate your own cotija cheese rather than buying pre-crumbled for better texture and fresher flavor.

Add the lime juice just before serving to prevent the acid from breaking down the other ingredients over time.

For parties, set up an esquites bar with various toppings like extra cheese, hot sauce, and lime wedges for customization.