

Tex-Mex / American Fusion

Main Courses

Smoky Cast-Iron Smash Burger Tacos

⌚ Prep: 15m

🔥 Cook: 10m

Σ Total: 25m

🍽️ 4 servings



Video ref: Brian Lagerstrom

MISE EN PLACE / INGREDIENTS [14]

- ☐ 1 lb Fresh 80/20 ground chuck beef
- ☐ 8 units Standard 5 to 6-inch corn or flour tortillas
- ☐ 8 slices Real deli-style American cheese slices (Kraft Deli Deluxe or Boar's Head)
- ☐ 1.5 tsp Kosher salt
- ☐ 1 tsp Freshly cracked black pepper
- ☐ 0.25 cup Mayonnaise
- ☐ 2 tbsp Ketchup
- ☐ 1 tbsp Chipotle peppers in adobo, finely minced
- ☐ 1 tsp Dijon mustard
- ☐ 1 tbsp Sweet pickle relish
- ☐ 0.5 tsp Garlic powder
- ☐ 0.5 tsp Smoked paprika
- ☐ 1 cup Crispy shredded iceberg lettuce
- ☐ 16 slices Dill pickle slices

US SUPERMARKET BRAND GUIDE

American Cheese: Kraft Deli Deluxe American Cheese
Contains real milk fat that melts luxuriously without an artificial plastic skin. ● 📍 Dairy cheese case.

80/20 Ground Chuck: USDA Choice 80/20 Ground Chuck
20% fat content is necessary to fry the beef edges into crispy lace. ● 📍 Meat department.

COOKING SEQUENCE & CHECKPOINTS

- 1

Stir Smoky Burger Sauce

⌚ 5 min

Whisk mayonnaise (0.25 cup), ketchup (2 tbsp), minced chipotle in adobo (1 tbsp), Dijon mustard (1 tsp), sweet pickle relish (1 tbsp), garlic powder (0.5 tsp), and smoked paprika (0.5 tsp). Chill until needed.
✓ Checkpoint: Velvety smoky pink burger sauce.
- 2

Portion, Press & Season

⌚ 10 min

Divide 80/20 ground beef (1 lb) into eight 2-ounce loose balls. Press each ball paper-thin across a tortilla (8 units) and season evenly with kosher salt (1.5 tsp) and freshly cracked black pepper (1 tsp).
✓ Checkpoint: Tortillas with thin seasoned raw beef layer pressed edge-to-edge.
- 3

Hard Sear in Cast Iron

⌚ 6 min

Place meat-side down in batches into screaming-hot cast iron. Press hard with a burger smasher for 10 seconds, then sear undisturbed for 2 minutes until lacy edges form and internal temperature reaches ≥160°F (71°C).
✓ Checkpoint: Deeply browned lacy caramelized beef rim.
- 4

Flip, Melt & Dress

⌚ 4 min

Scrape under the meat with a sharp spatula and flip so the tortilla is on the pan. Lay American cheese slices (8) on top, cover with a lid for 45 seconds to melt, then remove and top with crispy shredded iceberg lettuce (1 cup), dill pickle slices (16), and smoky burger sauce.
✓ Checkpoint: Molten cheese taco with a crispy toasted tortilla base.

🛡️ **FOOD SAFETY & INTERNAL TEMPERATURE: 160°F (71°C) USDA SAFE MINIMUM INTERNAL TEMPERATURE FOR GROUND BEEF AND PORK**

USDA Food Safety Minimum (≥160°F / 71°C): Ground beef and ground pork must be cooked to an internal temperature of at least 160°F (71°C) verified with an instant-read thermometer—never judge safety by color or juiciness alone—because grinding distributes surface bacteria throughout the meat.

👁️ **MASTER DONENESS CHECKPOINT:**

Dark caramelized lacy beef edges welded to a crispy griddled corn tortilla with blanket of gooey melted cheese.

🔍 **WHY IT WORKS:**

Direct Contact Maillard Smasher:
Smashing the raw beef disc between the heavy hot metal and the tortilla channels steam into the tortilla while locking the meat into continuous contact for maximum crust.

⚠️ **TROUBLESHOOTING:**

Tortilla cracked during pressing: Warm tortillas for 10 seconds wrapped in a damp paper towel in the microwave before assembling.