

Mexican Caesar Salad With Tequila & Lime-Grilled Shrimp and Chipotle Dressing

By Sunny Conley Photography by Russell Bamert



Masterfully orchestrate authentic Mexican cooking into a contemporary culinary quest when you create this extraordinary version of Caesar Salad. The resultant efforts - you'll soon discover - are exceptional and unexpected and will appeal to both eye and palate. It's texture and color are, oh, so Southwest.

Despite the Romanesque moniker, the Caesar Salad was concocted in Tijuana, Mexico by an Italian restaurateur. Yes, a chef (Caesar Cardini) invented the dish, not Julius Caesar!

Legend has it that on one busy weekend in 1924, Caesar, running low on restaurant fare, was forced to use kitchen leftovers that ultimately became Caesar's salad. Prepared tableside, Caesar lavished the romaine leaves with his inimitable dressing and then placed each stem side out, in a circle and served the salad on a flat dinner plate. Guests simply used their fingers to eat the salad, which undoubtedly pleased the dishwasher.

This connoisseur of fine food suggests using a fork, and perhaps even a spoon, to savor every drop and dollop of the Mexican Caesar Salad made lively and luscious with grilled shrimp marinated in a tequila base, and dressing that literally smokes with chipotle chile.



SHRIMP MARINADE

- ½ cup olive oil
- ⅓ cup freshly squeezed lime juice (or substitute bottled Key Lime juice)
- 3 tablespoons tequila
- 2 tablespoons chopped garlic
- 2 tablespoons chopped cilantro
- 18 jumbo shrimp, frozen fresh with shells removed
(leave tails intact, if desired)

Stir together ingredients for marinade. Add shrimp. Set aside to marinate ½ hour. Remove shrimp from marinade and gas grill over medium-hot setting for a couple of minutes on each side. The goal is for the shrimp to taste grilled! When shrimp is done, remove and set aside to cool.



SALAD

- 2 romaine lettuce hearts,
torn into bite-size pieces
- 3 medium vine-ripened tomatoes,
seeded and chopped into 1/4-inch pieces
- 1 cup corn kernels, uncooked and fresh from
the cob (2 or 3 cobs, depending on size)
- Garnish:
Freshly grated Parmesan cheese
Cilantro
Croutons, large size

In a large salad bowl, mix romaine, corn, and tomatoes with dressing. Place on a large serving platter. Garnish with Parmesan cheese, croutons and cilantro.

DRESSING

Whip the following ingredients into a smooth consistency:

- 1 cup mayonnaise
- ½ cup chicken broth
- 3 tablespoons soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon freshly
squeezed lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- 2 teaspoons chipotle powder or to taste

Refrigerate for at least 30 minutes.