

Green Tomato Sauce

Salsa Verde or Salsa de Tomatillo

Not to be confused with green tomatoes (or unripe cape gooseberries), tomatillos are poor cousins of the ground cherry. Aztecs dined upon them long before the genes of Cortez swam down White River.



As for tomatillo stories, Pickerel has only one.

Once upon a time, India Robles, a wide-bottomed field forager and Pickerel's would-be mistress-of-mayhem-with-a-machete, delivered tomatillos—freshly picked from dew-laden vines in the predawn darkness—to his doorstep for ten pesos a pail. A Pickerelian price. Then one morning, when the tropical sun was high, Pickerel made the mistake of trying to be his hospitable self. He

said to India Robles, this tomatillo thief, “Come in out of the heat, India. Have a seat on the sofa, and let me get you something cool to drink.” The invitation was innocent enough, but India mistook Pickerel's lecherous smile and the bulge in his pants (his pockets were full of limes) as preliminaries to a sofa seduction. What Pickerel saw next was the flash of sharpened steel, and then, as if the Force be with her, India Robles waved a bright-bladed machete at him—more precisely, at his crotch. Where this instrument of phallic downfall came from, Pickerel dared not ask, though there was only one place on wide-bottomed India where an 18-inch blade could hide without glinting in the sunlight.

Sadly, that was the last time Pickerel benefited from the low price of stolen tomatillos. He now buys them at his local market, and he suggests you do the same.

Ingredientes (makes 2 cups)

12 green tomatoes (12 *tomatillos*)

1 serrano chili (1 *chile serrano*)

1 garlic clove, peeled (1 *diente de ajo, pelado*)

1 tsp salt (1 *cucharadita de sal*)

1/2 tsp chicken bouillon powder (1/2 *cucharadita de consomé de pollo en polvo*)

Equipo

Saucepan (*cazo*) and colander (*escurridor*)

Small plastic bag (a bread bag will work) for sweating charred chilies (*una bolsa de plástico chica para hacer sudar los chiles tatemados*)

Blender (*licuadora*)

Preparación

After removing papery husks, wash tomatillos. Place in a saucepan with 3 cups of cold water. Boil tomatillos for 10 minutes or until they are soft. Drain in colander. Char serrano chili and peel skin. (See *Charring Chili Peppers*, page 30.) Sever stem and cut chili lengthwise to remove seeds and veins. (See *Deveining Chili Peppers*, page 30.) Place chili in blender with garlic, salt, bouillon powder, and boiled tomatillos. Do *not* add water. Blend until smooth. Your tomatillo sauce is ready for enchiladas, *chilaquiles*, and eggs. You may also refrigerate for later use.

