



Salsa System

Salsa is essentially just a mash up of your favourite vegetal/fruity and spicy flavours. Easy! Explore the market for fresh, interesting and inspiring produce. Make your own seasonal favourite salsas using *your* sense of taste to create nourishing snacks and sauces to brighten multitudes of meals!

tree house tips

- **Follow a creative salsa system instead of relying on recipes:** Combine any varieties of ingredients from **A, B, C, D, E, F** - with **F** being your decision on texture (smooth or chunky). Think about fresh flavours, nourishing qualities, size of ingredients, and textural elements.
- Think **explore instead of chore** mindset when you are in the market/farm/backyard. Freedom to create within healthful eating parameters encourages positive eating experiences. **Free yourself to experiment. Taste mistakes in the kitchen = future mastery of skills.**
- **Taste, taste, taste** your creation to decide the balance of flavours *you* like. Add new ingredients a little bit at a time. Think **fresh and think piquant** when you are creating your salsa masterpiece. Fresh creations can keep for weeks. Make extra quantities to last.
- **Family cooking: Creative kids and also tentative beginners love making this** - encourage family to balance flavours and ingredients by using all of their senses, tasting and then trusting their instincts. Team work solves time constraints. Kids can take over making salsa systems permanently!

chopping ingredients/balancing flavours

- We all need a large variety of colour from varied fruits and vegetables on our plates but are short on time for kitchen preparations. Invest in a sharp chef knife (and keep it sharp), a large cutting board and anchor the board safely in place with a cloth underneath. Investigate chef knife skills.
- Chop vegetables/fruits according to your preference. Do you want delicate pieces or large

and chunky? You could even purée your finished salsa, or purée 1/2 and leave 1/2 unpuréed. These choices affect visuals and the overall mouth-feel of the finished texture.

- Slowly mix your choices together. Have tasting spoons ready. Salsa flavour and textural balances to consider: piquant (sour) elements; fresh, vegetal/fruity elements; unique, earthy, dried spice elements; the brightness of fresh herb elements; the garlicky element of the allium family (garlic, onion, chive, leek); hot peppery heat; crunchy, chunky, smooth, textured; then taste *and taste* and add a touch of salt if needed.

variations to try

- This is a system for sensory exploration! Here are some ideas for inspiration, feel free to alter according to your personal tastes/needs and seasonal ingredients: **Mango Salsa:** Combine ripe orange/green mangoes, rice wine vinegar, lime juice, red peppers, fresh garlic/onion, fish sauce, chillies, herbs like mint, basil, cilantro and mango pit stock. (Mango pit stock: Save your fleshy pits and simmer with water until tasty.) **Heirloom zebra green tomato or tomatillo salsa:** Combine roasted onions, garlic, fresh heirloom green or underripe red tomatoes (or fruity Mexican tomatillos), red wine vinegar or lemon juice, dried or fresh oregano, fresh basil, cooked beet or Swiss chard greens, quality olive oil, salt.

Serves: Varies

Yields: Varies

Equipment: Sharp chef knife, large cutting board, medium pot if cooking decisions are made, tasting spoons.

salsa ingredients to combine

A - chopped, fresh or cooked favourite **fruits/vegetables**

B - **sour** or fruity flavourings

C - **fresh herbs and dried spices**, a bit of salt

D - chopped **allium-family** ingredient like onion, garlic, green onion, chive or leek

E - hot peppery **heat**

F - **textures** like chopped ingredient sizes & addition of cooked legumes like black beans, chick peas, etc.

Chef Secrets:

salsa = sauce! • **The Spanish word salsa means sauce.** Salsa is more than just the common bottled variety. It can be raw or cooked, or a combination of both. It can be chunky, puréed or smashed to the desired texture in a mortar & pestle. Serve fresh fruit or vegetable salsas on top/with any snack or dinner!

Try toasting your dried whole

spices • In a small, dry, pot over low-medium heat - toast spices/seeds until fragrant (1-3 minutes). Pour toasted spices onto a plate to avoid burning, then grind with a mortar & pestle or a spice/coffee grinder. Ta-da - quick and very tasty recipe hack!