

SELECTING FRESH GREEN CHILES

Choose chiles that are bright green, smooth, symmetrical, heavy for their size, mature and crisp. Chiles that curl up tightly are hard to roast in your oven or on your stove, so pick pods that will lie relatively flat.

ROASTING HATCH CHILES

During the green chile season, you can buy fresh chiles or you can buy them already roasted. It's easier (and pricier) to buy chiles already roasted. But for those of us in love with green chiles, a big part of the fun is to roast our own and let the aroma fill out kitchens.

There are several ways to do this, and it's really hard to mess up, so give it a try.

- **Oven or Broiler Method:** Place chiles in a hot oven or broiler for 6 to 8 minutes or until skin blisters away from the flesh of the chile.
- **Range-Top Method:** Cover gas or electric burner with a layer of heavy wire mesh and place chiles on a mesh once it's hot. Remove once skin has blistered.
- **Outdoor Grill Method:** Place chiles on a charcoal or gas grill about 5 to 6 minutes inches above heat source. Remove once skin has blistered.
- **Comal Method:** Heat the Comal (the cast-iron plaque used to heat tortillas). Place several chiles on it, and turn them as they blacken.

PREP & FREEZING

Once the chiles are blistered black all over, place them in a plastic or paper bag for about 10 minutes. Remove skin and seeds by running them under cool water. Chiles are ready to use in recipes

To freeze for later use, place whole or diced chiles in a plastic bag that can lie flat for faster freezing.

Source: New Mexico Department of Agriculture

RECIPE: HATCH CHILE CORN BREAD

9 servings

INGREDIENTS

3 Hatch chiles (about 7 oz. total)
1 cup yellow corn meal
1 cup all-purpose flour
2 tablespoons sugar (if desired)
4 teaspoons baking powder
½ teaspoon salt
1 cup (packed) grated extra-sharp cheddar cheese
1 cup fat free milk
1 egg
3 tablespoons Land O' Lakes Light Butter

INSTRUCTIONS

- Char chiles over gas flame or in broiler until blackened on all sides. Enclose in plastic bag; let stand 10 minutes. Peel, seed and chop chiles. Set aside.
- In medium bowl, combine corn meal, flour, sugar, baking powder and salt. Stir in cheese. Add milk, egg and butter. Beat until fairly smooth, about 1 minute.
- Pour into 8 or 9-inch square baking pan which has been sprayed with nonstick cooking spray.
- Bake in preheated 425°F oven for 20 to 25 minutes.

RECIPE: GREEN CHILE CHICKEN ENCHILADA CASSEROLE

12 servings

INGREDIENTS

2 medium onions, chopped
4 gloves garlic, minced
oil for sautéing
1-26 oz. can 98% fat free Cream of Chicken Soup
¾ cups fat free milk
2 cups roasted, peeled and chopped Hatch green chiles
salt and pepper to taste
3 whole chicken breasts, cooked and shredded
15 corn tortillas, torn into quarters
2 cups shredded cheese

INSTRUCTIONS

- Preheat oven to 350°F.
- Sauté onions and garlic in a large, nonstick saucepan until soft.
- Add soup, milk, chiles, salt and pepper. Bring to a simmer, remove from heat. Stir in chicken.
- In a 13 x 9-inch glass pan, layer corn tortillas, chicken sauce and cheese. Cover and bake for 20 minutes.
- Uncover, and bake an additional 20 minutes, or until casserole begins to pull away from side of pan.