



# In the Kitchen

with Barb Agee

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## A Tomatillo Tale

The tomatillo resembles a miniature Chinese lantern wrapped in crinkly green or brown paper. It is related to tomatoes and its less tart, lemony flavor that will brighten a favorite dish. These "husk tomatoes" pair nicely with the spicier flavors of Mexican cooking. Tomatillos can be eaten fresh in salads and gazpacho.

Boiled or grilled, they are excellent served as a vegetable side dish; or chopped and added to sauces, guacamole, green salsa and seafood and poultry dishes.



### Roasted Tomatillo Guacamole with Bacon and Ramps

6 medium tomatillos, husked, rinsed and cut in half lengthwise  
4 ramps or large green onions or sweet onion \*  
Olive oil  
1 small jalapeno, stemmed and seeded  
5 thick slices of bacon

3 ripe medium to large avocados  
2 tablespoons fresh lime juice  
2 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro  
Salt

Heat oven to 500°F. Place a broiler pan or heavy grill pan in the oven and heat for 10 minutes until very hot. Lay the tomatillos cut side down on hot pan. Place pan in the oven for 5 to 6 minutes, until soft and browned on one side. Flip over and cook for another 4 minutes. Remove from pan and cool.

Reheat the broiler pan until very hot. Lightly brush onions with oil. Place onions and chile on hot pan and place in oven for 8 to 10 minutes until soft and browned. Remove onions and chile and cool. Chop the onions, pepper and tomatillos. Place the vegetables into a large bowl. While the vegetables cool, in a skillet cook the bacon until crispy. Drain on a paper towel. When the bacon is cool, chop it into small pieces.

Add the avocados to bowl with the tomatillo mixture. Using a potato masher, coarsely mash the avocados with the tomatillo mixture. Stir in the lime juice. Gently fold in the cilantro and bacon. Salt to taste. *Makes about 3 cups*

\* Use ½ medium onion, cut into ¼-inch slices

### Spicy Tomatillo Pesto Linguine

1 pound linguine  
½ pound tomatillo, husked and quartered  
1 cup packed cilantro, washed and dried  
2 cloves garlic  
¼ cup pine nuts

½ small jalapeno, seeds removed  
⅓ cup extra-virgin olive oil  
2 tablespoons fresh lime juice  
Kosher salt and fresh ground pepper  
Cook the pasta according to the directions on the box.

While pasta is cooking, make the pesto. Add the jalapeno, pine nuts and garlic to the bowl of a food processor and pulse to combine. Add the cilantro, ¾ of the tomatillos, lime juice and a little salt. Pulse to combine. While the processor is running, add the olive oil. Season with more salt and pepper to taste.

Toss pasta with enough pesto to coat thoroughly. Serve with some chopped tomatillos on top with a few toasted pine nuts. *Serves 8*

## Corn and Chicken Salad with Tomatillos

3 cups cooked white or brown rice, cooled  
2 cups cooked chicken, diced  
1 cup niblet corn  
½ red sweet pepper, diced  
1 cup diced carrots

1½ cups tomatillos, husked and small chunks  
Salt  
Tomatillo Chile Dressing (*see recipe below*)  
4 cups thinly sliced Napa cabbage

Combine the rice, chicken, corn, sweet pepper, carrot and tomatillos in a large bowl and mix well. Pour dressing over the rice mixture. Toss gently to coat. Refrigerate for 30 minutes. Before serving, toss cabbage with rice mixture. *Makes 8 main-dish servings*

### Tomatillo Chile Dressing

½ cup tomatillos, husked and cut into quarters  
1 tablespoon fresh Serrano or Jalapeno chile, minced  
⅓ cup white balsamic vinegar  
1 teaspoon sugar  
2 green onions, sliced  
¼ teaspoon salt

Combine the tomatillos, vinegar, green onions, pepper, sugar and salt in a blender or food processor. Cover and process until smooth.



## Cumin-Crusted Chicken Breasts with Grilled Tomatillo Salsa

6 chicken breasts cutlets  
¼ cup canola oil

¼ cup Cumin Crust Rub (*see recipe below*)  
Tomatillo Salsa (*see recipe below*)

In a large bowl combine chicken breasts and oil. Toss to coat evenly. Transfer breasts to a platter and sprinkle evenly with the Cumin Crust Rub (*see recipe below*). Set aside.

Place the chicken breasts over the indirect heat area of the grill. Cook, turning once, for 10 to 12 minutes. Instant-read thermometer should read 170°F. Transfer to a serving platter, tent with foil and rest 5 minutes. Serve with a tablespoon of Tomatillo Salsa (*see recipe below*) on each chicken breast and the remainder of the Tomatillo Salsa in a bowl with corn chips. *Makes 6 servings*

### Cumin Crust Rub

2 teaspoons cumin  
2 teaspoons smoked paprika

2 teaspoons chile powder

Mix together.

### Tomatillo Salsa

5 large tomatillos, husks remove, and cut in half  
1 jalapeno, halved lengthwise and seeded  
¼ cup fresh lime juice

1 tablespoon olive oil  
½ cup fresh cilantro, chopped

To make the salsa, place the tomatillos and chile in a grill basket over the direct heat area of the grill. Cook turning as needed until charred on all sides, about 3 minutes. Transfer the tomatillos and chile to a blender, add the lime juice and oil, pulse until combined but still chunky. Transfer to a bowl and add the cilantro and season with salt to taste. This salsa can be made in advance and stored in the refrigerator. Bring to room temperature before serving.