

# TACO cookbook



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NAEYC's Week of the Young Child Taco Cookbook is a fun, food-themed resource that celebrates cooking together and learning by connecting math with literacy skills, science, and more! Encouraging healthy choices and learning about nutrition can establish lifelong healthy eating habits. Children of all ages can

mix, measure, and engage in the process of cooking and eating! Cooking together also allows children to make decisions and important choices during mealtime. By providing healthy options and giving young children the autonomy to choose, parents, teachers, and children can have a happy, nutritious mealtime.



These fun, kid-friendly recipes provide tasty taco-themed cooking experiences for children of all ages. All of these recipes and images were submitted by NAEYC supporters, members, and accredited programs as different ways to learn through recipes and activities, whether in the classroom or at home!

**In these recipes, many of the steps listed are kid-friendly. The letter **A** is used throughout this resource to indicate when there is a step for an adult.**



# FRESH FRUIT TACOS

Submitted by **St. Pius Elementary School, Lafayette, Louisiana**

“Fresh Fruit Tacos were the order of the day as St. Pius Elementary School in Lafayette, Louisiana, put a spin on the traditional taco with a healthy, sweet version. PreK4 and kindergarten students had a chance to make their own sweet treat, complete with all the fixings. We’re excited about sharing this yummy recipe with fellow taco lovers!”

## INGREDIENTS

- Whole wheat tortillas (small)
- Water
- Ground cinnamon
- Sugar
- Greek yogurt (vanilla flavored)
- Your choice of fresh fruit (diced):
  - Strawberries
  - Mangos
  - Pineapples
  - Kiwis
  - Or any other favorite fruit will do

**Using recipes that introduce choices is a great way to get children involved in the cooking process. Young children are more likely to try new ingredients when they are able to control their own choices and explore their own flavor combinations!**

## DIRECTIONS

- A 1.** Preheat oven to 325°F (toaster ovens work best.)
- 2.** Using a round, plastic cookie cutter, cut small circles from the whole wheat tortillas (approx. 2 per small tortilla). Lay these little tortillas on a baking pan. Place water in a small bowl; lightly coat the top side of the tortillas with water, using a basting brush. Mix a small amount of ground cinnamon and sugar in a bowl; dust the moist tortillas with the cinnamon and sugar mixture.
- A 3.** Using tongs, individually drape each tortilla over the wire rack in the toaster oven (cinnamon/ sugar side facing down), allowing the sides of the tortilla to fall between two metal bars on the rack (this will give the tortillas a curved, “taco” shape). Bake approx. 5–7 minutes, checking the tortillas periodically (time will vary depending on the moisture level of each tortilla). Using tongs, lift the tortillas off of the rack and transfer to a cooling rack; tortillas should remain in this upside down position to cool, which is the final step in forming the taco shape.
- 4.** Transfer the cooled taco shells to a plate and place a dollop of vanilla Greek yogurt in the tortilla shell; use a spoon to smooth and cover the bottom and sides of the shell.
- 5.** Spoon your favorite fruit into the shell, and enjoy!



# BREAKFAST BURRITOS

Submitted by Learning Tree Preschool, Annapolis, Maryland (NAEYC Accredited)

“Mix things up and serve burritos for breakfast! These fun and easy burritos can be made in advance, frozen, and reheated in the microwave for a quick and easy breakfast on the go!”

## INGREDIENTS

- ¾ lb chopped ham
- 2 green onions, chopped
- 12 eggs
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 package (12) flour tortillas
- 1 package shredded cheese (8 oz)

## TOPPINGS

- Salsa
- Sour cream

## DIRECTIONS

- A** 1. Sauté ham in a 10-inch skillet. Stir in green onions. Remove from the skillet and set aside.
- A** 2. In a large bowl, beat eggs until well blended.
- A** 3. Melt the butter in the skillet. Add the eggs; cook on low heat, stirring frequently, until the eggs are scrambled and set. Add the ham and onions; mix gently.
4. Spoon the ham and egg mixture evenly onto each tortilla. Sprinkle with 2 tsp of cheese.
5. Fold in sides of the tortillas; roll them up to make burritos. Top with salsa and sour cream, if desired. Serve with fresh fruit.
6. Freezer instructions: Store extra burritos in resealable plastic bags. To warm, remove the burrito from the bag and wrap it in a moist paper towel. Microwave on high 1–3 minutes.

It's important to expand children's skills as their development permits. All young children do not develop impulse control at the same rate—when you notice that children can resist tasting raw ingredients, you can introduce cracking and mixing raw eggs or working with heated ingredients.



# "RAINBOW ROOM" SALSA

Submitted by Eastern Michigan University Children's Institute,  
Ypsilanti, Michigan

"At the Children's Institute on the campus of Eastern Michigan University, our salsa making all started with melting snow and ice on the playground.... The children were interested in things freezing and melting, so we began experimenting in the classroom. One day we melted cheese on our tortilla chips while following a very simple recipe. The children decided it was good, but it needed some salsa!"

## INGREDIENTS

- 1 red onion
- 1 green pepper
- 1 red pepper
- 4–6 tomatoes
- 1 lemon (juiced)
- A dash of salt and pepper

## DIRECTIONS

1. Chop the onion, peppers, and tomatoes, and put them in a large mixing bowl.
2. Squeeze the juice from the lemon, and add it to the chopped veggies. Add a pinch of salt and pepper to taste.
- A** 3. Put the salsa in the food processor for a few seconds, just to take care of the big chunks, if necessary. A
4. Serve the salsa with chips.

Following a recipe to create a dish has numerous benefits for young children, including:

- » Strengthening fine motor skills through cutting, pouring, and scooping.
- » Learning the concept of sequencing through reading recipes and discussing what comes first, second, and third in the cooking process.
- » Expanding vocabulary as children are exposed to new words and ingredients.



# PUERTO RICAN TACO (TACO PUERTORRIQUEÑO)

Submitted by Rainforest Kids Child Development Center, Hato Ray, Puerto Rico (NAEYC Accredited)

## INGREDIENTS

- Tortillas de maiz
- Queso del país (queso fresco)

- A** • Carne molida
- A** • Platano/amarillo

## INGREDIENTS

- Corn taco shells
- Cheese (queso fresco works well)

- A** • Cooked ground beef
- A** • Sweet yellow plantains (cooked and cut into chunks)

## DIRECCIONES

1. Poner dos cucharadas de carne molida en nuestra tortilla.
2. Poner dos amarillos a nuestra tortilla.
3. Poner trozos de queso del país.
4. Esta listo para comer.
5. Buen Provecho!

## DIRECTIONS

1. Place two big spoons of ground beef in your tortilla.
2. Add two plantain pieces to your tortilla.
3. Put a little cheese on top, and it's ready to eat!
4. Enjoy!

Planning inclusive activities like cooking together helps young dual language learners build vocabulary, skills, and knowledge in science and math, as well as academic vocabulary. The use of pictures and games, in addition to hands-on cooking activities, helps ensure all children understand!



# MEATY TACO CASSEROLE

Submitted by Knock Knock Children's Museum, with Holly Clegg, Baton Rouge, Louisiana

"This zesty, meaty casserole has a delicious biscuit surprise! You will be amazed at how extraordinarily tasty this simple combination is. It's also kid-friendly!"

## INGREDIENTS

- 1 lb ground beef
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 (10-ounce) can enchilada sauce or salsa
- 1 (8-ounce) can tomato sauce
- 1 (15-ounce) can black beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 cup frozen corn
- 1 (8-10 count) can reduced-fat refrigerator biscuits
- 1 cup shredded reduced-fat Mexican blend cheese
- 1/3 cup chopped green onions

**For more complex recipes, prep and plan ahead when possible! Pre-measuring the ingredients into separate containers and having all of your supplies ready before you invite your young children over to help will allow you some control and prevent unanticipated dumping, while keeping the activity flowing!**

## DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Coat 13 x 9 x 2-inch baking dish with nonstick cooking spray. A
2. In a large nonstick skillet, cook the meat and onion until the meat is done; drain excess fat.
3. Mix the enchilada sauce or salsa, tomato sauce, and black beans and corn, stirring well. Tear biscuits into fourths.
4. Stir the veggie mixture into the meat mixture, then transfer it to the baking dish. Mix in the biscuit chunks last.
5. Bake 25 minutes. Remove it from the oven, and sprinkle it with cheese and green onions. Return the baking dish to the oven and bake 5–7 minutes more, or until the cheese is melted. A



# BLACK BEAN BROWNIES

Submitted by Elmhurst Academy, Elmhurst, Illinois (NAEYC Accredited)

(Gluten free)

## INGREDIENTS

- 1½ cups cooked black beans (or 1 15-ounce can, beans drained and rinsed)
- 3 eggs
- 3 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 2 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- ½ teaspoon baking powder
- Pinch of salt
- \*optional: ½ cup carob chips or chocolate chips

## DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F.
2. Spray an 8x8 pan with cooking spray, and line the pan with parchment paper.
- A 3. Use a food processor to blend the beans into a paste; mix them in with the rest of the ingredients until smooth.
4. Pour the batter into the the pan, and sprinkle the carob/chocolate chips onto the mix.
- A 5. Bake for 25-30 minutes.

**You can't help but use math when you're baking. Doubling recipes requires multiplying, halving a recipe requires dividing, and measuring a ½ cup or a ¼ teaspoon gets you working with easy fractions. For very young learners, integrate math by counting out chocolate chips!**

