

SERVES 10-12

Chicken Tortilla Soup Topping Bar Checklist

Everything you need to host a crowd without the stress.

Hosting a crowd does not have to be hard.
This complete guide keeps your kitchen organized.
Follow the steps and enjoy your own party.

PRINT ME. SHOP ME. CHECK ME OFF.

Master Shopping List

Quantities calibrated for 10-12 guests.

The Soup Base

- ☐ 4 cartons (32 oz each) low-sodium chicken broth
- ☐ 3 lbs boneless, skinless chicken breasts or thighs
- ☐ 2 cans (14.5 oz each) fire-roasted diced tomatoes
- ☐ 2 cans (15 oz each) black beans or pinto beans
- ☐ 2 cans (15 oz each) sweet corn, drained
- ☐ 2 medium yellow onions
- ☐ 1 bulb fresh garlic

Crunchy Toppings

- ☐ 3 bags corn tortilla strips or chips
- ☐ 2 bunches fresh radishes (sliced thin)

Creamy Toppings

- ☐ 5-6 ripe Hass avocados
- ☐ 2 containers (16 oz each) Mexican crema or sour cream
- ☐ 16 oz sharp cheddar or Monterey Jack, shredded
- ☐ 8 oz queso fresco (crumbling cheese)

Fresh Toppings

- ☐ 3 bunches fresh cilantro
- ☐ 8-10 fresh limes (cut into wedges)
- ☐ 2 red onions (diced or pickled)
- ☐ 4-5 fresh jalapeños (sliced)

Pantry & Spices

- ☐ Neutral cooking oil (canola or avocado)
- ☐ Chili powder, cumin, smoked paprika, oregano
- ☐ Kosher salt and black pepper
- ☐ Dried guajillo or ancho chiles (optional)

Supplies

- ☐ 12 disposable or ceramic soup bowls
- ☐ 12 soup spoons + small serving spoons
- ☐ 1 soup ladle + 1 large serving spoon
- ☐ Slow cooker or large heavy-bottom pot
- ☐ Food labels and marker
- ☐ Instant-read meat thermometer

Per Person Quantity Guide

Use this quick math reference to ensure you never run out of food when hosting 12 hungry guests.

Item	Per Person	For 12 People
☐ Chicken Soup Base	1.5 cups	18-20 cups (approx. 5 qts)
☐ Tortilla Strips / Chips	1 handful (1 oz)	3 large bags (12 oz each)
☐ Shredded Cheese	1/4 cup	3 cups (16 oz total)
☐ Sour Cream / Crema	2 tablespoons	1.5 cups (16 oz total)
☐ Fresh Avocado	1/2 avocado	6 ripe avocados
☐ Fresh Cilantro	1 tablespoon	3 small bunches
☐ Lime Wedges	2 wedges	2 full bags (8-10 limes)
☐ Sliced Radishes	4-5 slices	2 bunches
☐ Sliced Jalapeños	3-4 slices	4-5 fresh peppers
☐ Black Beans	2 tablespoons	2 cans (15 oz each)
☐ Sweet Corn	2 tablespoons	2 cans (15 oz each)

Rule of Thumb

When hosting a topping bar, people take more crunchy and creamy toppings than fresh greens. Buy an extra bag of tortilla strips and one extra avocado just in case.

Prep Timeline

Break up your tasks so party day feels relaxing and calm.

2 Days Before

- ☐ Complete master grocery shopping trip
- ☐ Check inventory of bowls, spoons, and serving utensils
- ☐ Defrost chicken breasts/thighs in the refrigerator overnight

1 Day Before

- ☐ Chop onions, garlic, and fresh vegetables
- ☐ Make pickled red onions (if using) and store in fridge
- ☐ Shred cheese and store in airtight containers
- ☐ Write out topping bar and dietary restriction labels

The Morning Of

- ☐ Simmer soup base, shred chicken, and combine
- ☐ Wash all fresh produce, cilantro, and limes
- ☐ Slice limes into wedges and slice radishes
- ☐ Set up dining table layout with bowls and spoons

1 Hour Before Guests Arrive

- ☐ Reheat soup to 165°F and transfer to slow cooker on warm
- ☐ Arrange all cold toppings into small bowls
- ☐ Place cut-out labels in front of each topping bowl
- ☐ Put out napkins, soup bowls, and serving utensils

Topping Bar Labels

Cut along dashed lines and place in front of each bowl.

Tortilla Strips Crispy corn crunch for texture	Shredded Cheese Melty cheddar and jack blend
Fresh Avocado Cool and creamy diced fruit	Sour Cream / Crema Rich and tangy dollop
Fresh Cilantro Bright herbal finish	Lime Wedges Squeeze for fresh citrus zing
Pickled Red Onions Sharp and tangy bite	Sliced Radishes Peppery and crunchy slices
Jalapeños Fresh sliced chili heat	Roasted Corn Sweet charred kernel goodness
Black Beans Hearty protein boost	Queso Fresco Mild crumbly Mexican cheese

Dietary Restriction Labels

Cut along dashed lines and place near your buffet setup to guide guests with specific dietary needs.

Dairy-Free Options

Skip the shredded cheese, queso fresco, and sour cream. Enjoy soup base, avocado, cilantro, limes, radishes, and tortilla strips.

Vegan Options

Skip the chicken base and dairy. Use vegetable broth and extra beans/corn for the base. Top with avocado, cilantro, lime, and radishes.

Gluten-Free Options

Ensure tortilla strips and chips are certified gluten-free (corn-based). All other natural fresh toppings and soup ingredients are naturally safe.

Low-Sodium Options

Use low-sodium chicken broth and rinse canned beans thoroughly. Skip salted tortilla chips and rely on fresh herbs and lime for flavor.

Food Safety & Party Day Checklist

Food Safety Quick Reference

- **Holding Temp:** Keep hot soup above 140°F in slow cooker.
- **Reheating:** Reheat leftovers to steaming hot (165°F).
- **2-Hour Rule:** Refrigerate perishable toppings after 2 hours at room temp.
- **Leftovers:** Store soup in fridge for up to 4 days.
- **Freezer:** Freeze leftover soup base (without toppings) for up to 3 months.

Setup Checklist

- ☐ Wipe down dining and buffet tables
- ☐ Plug in slow cooker and test heat
- ☐ Put out stack of bowls and spoons
- ☐ Place napkins and trash bin nearby
- ☐ Put out printed food labels

During the Party

- ☐ Check soup temperature halfway through
- ☐ Refill empty avocado and cheese bowls
- ☐ Wipe down any messy spills around ladle

After the Party

- ☐ Pack leftover toppings into airtight containers
- ☐ Store leftover soup in refrigerator
- ☐ Wash serving bowls and utensils

Notes & Links

Use this space to track your guest count, recipe adjustments, or grocery reminders.

Guest Count: _____ **Date:** _____

Menu Notes & Reminders

Recipe Links & Sources: [Insert your favorite chicken tortilla soup recipe URL or book reference here]