MEXICAN · SIDE

Ensalada de Nopales (Cactus Salad with Panela Cheese)

Ensalada de nopales

45 min · Serves 10 · 140 kcal a serve · Video 4:13 in Spanish · El sabor latino

Vegetarian · Gluten-free ingredients · Nut-free

Only 5 g net carbs and 3.5 g fibre a serve from cactus paddles cooked dry with no oil, plus tomato and onion, and 9 g protein, mostly from the fresh panela cheese. Rich in calcium.

Diet notes: Low carb (5.1 g net carbs) but not keto: 56% of the energy is from fat, and keto meals get about 60% or more.

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Ingredients

8 · SERVES 10

- [ ] 1.35 kg **cleaned nopal cactus paddles** (16–18 paddles), cut into strips
- [ ] ½ tsp **salt** (for cooking the nopales)
- [ ] 1 medium **onion**, finely diced
- [ ] 3 **ripe tomatoes**, diced
- [ ] 350 g **queso panela** (fresh Mexican cheese), diced
- [ ] 3–4 tbsp **chiles en vinagre** (pickled jalapeños, with a few of their carrot slices)
- [ ] 1 bunch **fresh coriander** (cilantro), chopped
- [ ] **black pepper**, to taste (optional)

Contains: Milk. Check labels on stock, sauces and spice mixes.

Method

TIMES = THE MOMENT IN THE VIDEO

1. Cut the cleaned cactus paddles into medium strips. 1:01
2. Cook them in a wide pan over medium heat with ½ tsp salt (and 3–4 tomatillo husks, if you have them, to draw out the slime). After about 10 minutes they release their slime; keep cooking until the pan is dry. Remove the husks and cool. 1:26
3. Tip the cold nopales into a large bowl and add the onion, coriander, tomato, pickled jalapeños (with their carrot slices) and diced cheese. 2:15
4. Season with salt and pepper only if needed, mix well and serve, or keep covered in the fridge. 3:02

> **Tip** Makes about 10 side serves (our estimate). Feta or queso fresco work if you can't find panela. Serve with grilled or slow-cooked meats; keeps 2–3 days in the fridge.

The method is a summary in our words, in English — the video (in Spanish) shows every step.

One serve gives you

1 OF 10 · ESTIMATE

ENERGY	PROTEIN	CARBOHYDRATE	FIBRE	FAT	SODIUM
140 kcal	8.8 g	8.7 g	3.6 g	8.6 g	480 mg
580 kJ	18% of a day	5.1 g net · 4 g sugars	13% of a day	4.5 g saturated	21% of a day
		3% of a day		11% of a day	

Energy from net carbs 15% · protein 26% · fat 59% — low carb (under 26% of the energy from carbs)

High in (20%+ of a day) Calcium 33% · Vitamin B12 24%

Source of (10–19%) Magnesium 19% · Vitamin K 17% · Vitamin C 16% · Vitamin A 15% · Selenium 14% · Zinc 12% · Vitamin B6 11%

Recipe and video: El sabor latino (@Elsaborlatino1) on YouTube — youtube.com/watch?v=n9kKUli0pYI, published 1 March 2024. All credit for the recipe goes to the cook; please watch and support their channel.

By Notbroken: the method summary, the diet notes and the nutrition estimate — worked out from the ingredient list with USDA FoodData Central values; % of a day compares one serve with the US FDA daily values on food labels (2,000 kcal). Brands, portions and cooking change the real numbers.

General information about food, not medical or dietary advice. Free, no sign-up: notbroken.io/eat/ensalada-de-nopales