

Guac Talk

Buy it, mix it, or make it from scratch

BY ANDREA LYNN

In many Spanish-speaking countries, guacamole was once called the “butter of the poor.” Is it any wonder why? Creamy, flavorful and cheap at the time, guacamole could be utilized in a number of ways. We’ve come up with our own twists that, while not traditional, are a delicious take on the classic.

Blend It

Combine with mashed avocados:

Tomatillo chunks or purée • Mashed bananas
Puréed edamame • Refried pinto or black beans
Cream cheese, softened • Roasted garlic
Cilantro pesto • Salsa or pico de gallo
Unsweetened whipped cream • Sour cream
Puréed chipotles in adobo sauce

Mix It

Chunky additions to guacamole:

Grapefruit segments
Roasted cherry tomatoes
Corn + chipotles
Lime, cumin and jicama
Black beans or black-eyed peas
Strawberries
Grated green apples
Crumbled bacon
Queso fresco or blue cheese
Diced, cooked shrimp
Pineapple and mango chunks
Basil
Dried or roasted chiles
Pomegranate seeds

Dip It

When you want more than chips:

Top on a steak or burger
Pile on a hot dog
Mix into a salad
Layer on cooked chicken with cheese
Spread into a taco or inside a quesadilla
Mix with sour cream; eat with pretzels or raw veggies
Use as a condiment on sandwiches, like turkey and swiss
Stuff into potato skins



Tasting Notes

Store-bought guacamole has come a long way recently; gone are the flavorless renditions of yesteryear. Now, most are sealed in plastic to ensure freshness and made with very few ingredients except avocado and spices, which is exactly the way it should be. Here are a few guacamoles that could easily pass as homemade, along with a few mixes to combine with avocados to enhance your guacamole experience.



Holy Moly Guacamole Dip Mix

This gets an added wow factor from whole corn kernels in the mix. Even better is the strong jolt of spiciness from a combo of jalapeño and red chile powder. plentifulpantry.com; 800-727-8284

Zaaschila Guacamole

Technically speaking, this is more like avocado in liquid form, an avocado hot sauce, if you will (and we will). Available in both medium and hot, the hot version rocked our world (and our mouths). Limey and tangy, use for breakfast burritos, pour on poultry or swirl with sour cream for a dip. mexgrocer.com; 877-463-9476

Frontera All-Natural Guacamole Mix

This sauce takes out all the work of husking, cleaning and puréeing tomatillos; a kick of green chiles is added for a tasty edge. Mix into a mashed avocado for a guacamole that everyone will keep guessing what the secret ingredient is. rickbayless.com; 312-661-1434

Yucatan Authentic Guacamole

A guacamole that's handmade—how much more authentic does it get? The guac is a thick, smooth purée with massive chunks of avocado. Seasonings and red bell pepper just add to the appeal of this dip that's an ideal consistency for slathering on chips. yucatanfoods.com; 310-342-5363

Yucatan Avo-Hummus

We were initially skeptical about the thought of guacamole mixed with hummus. Color us wrong. An even split of 50 percent avocado and 50 percent hummus, it's a taste all of its own. With a slight tang and creamy consistency, eat with spicy pita chips. yucatanfoods.com; 310-342-5363

Wholly GuacaSalsa

When you're having trouble choosing between which type of dip to indulge in—salsa or guac—a mix of the two provides the ultimate tasty compromise. eatwholly.com

Margaritaville Guacamole Zesty Island Garlic

A strong blast of garlic along with a reliable

chile flavor makes this guacamole sing. There's just a hint of cilantro and a chunkiness that translates into a homemade feel. margaritavillefoods.com

Wholly Guacamole Spicy

Smooth and luscious, this guacamole is one of the spicier ones that we tasted, yet it's all done without overwhelming the fresh avocado feel. Perfect to plop on a cheeseburger. eatwholly.com

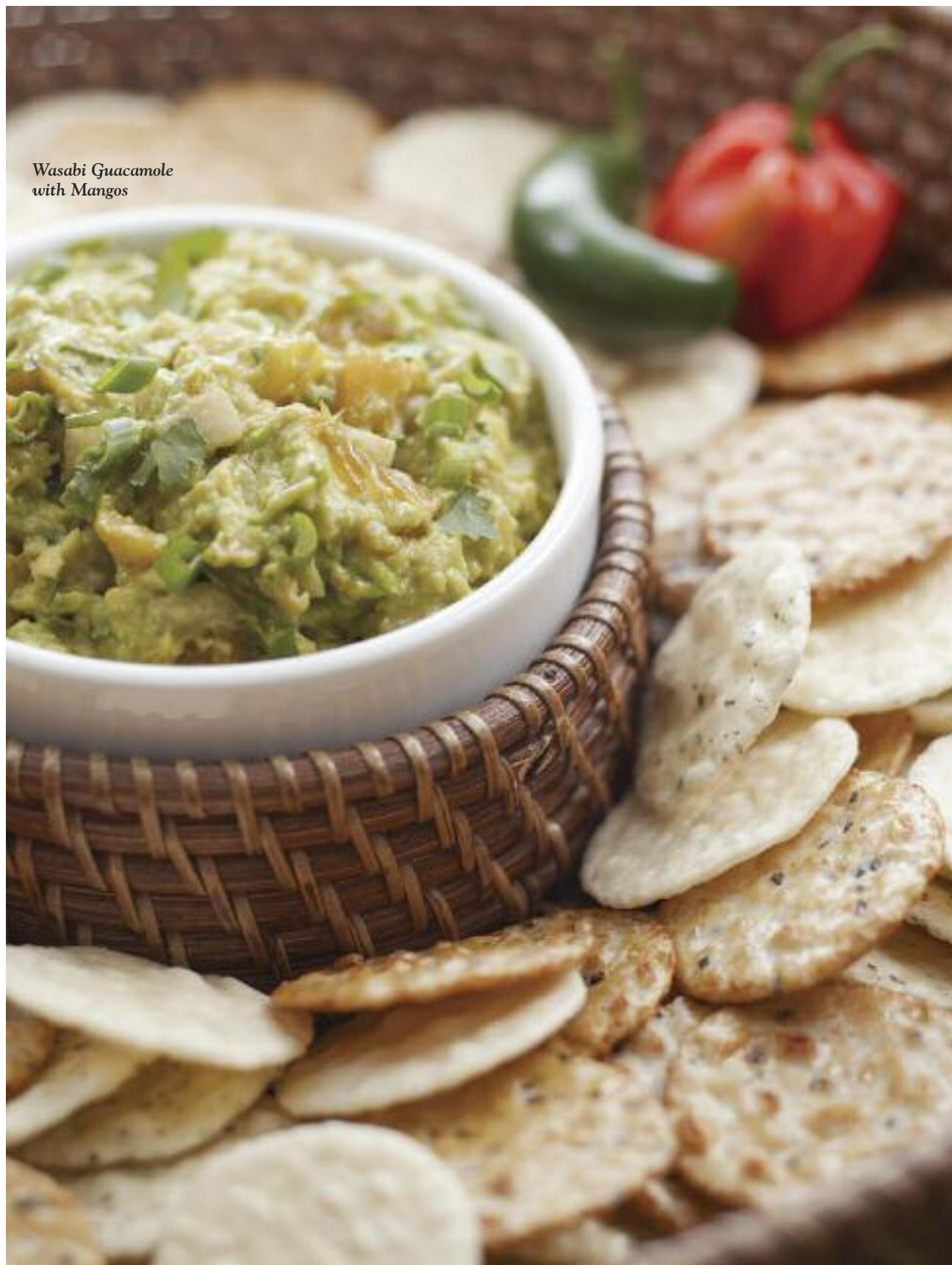
Calavo Picante Guacamole

A smooth paste of avocado with a chunky pico de gallo supporting cast. Tomatoes, cilantro, peppers, oh my! This is the dip of choice for those who love lots of flavors roaming around in their guac. calavo.com; 805-525-1245

Simply Organic Guacamole Mix

Everything's organic in this spice shake to sprinkle over an avocado. Containing dehydrated cilantro, red pepper, garlic and black pepper, why not add some sour cream for a touch of luxury? simplyorganicfoods.com; 800-669-3275





*Wasabi Guacamole
with Mangos*

Photography by Bill Milne



Since avocados are fruits, a distant relation of pears, it makes sense that they pair so well with other fruits in a guacamole. Anything from kiwis, strawberries or bananas adds a tartness and sweetness to combat the richness of an avocado. Or, try the tropical combination of mangos, jicama and oranges like in the recipe below.

Wasabi Guacamole with Mangos

Yield: 4 servings • Zest Factor: Medium

An Asian-spin on a Mexican classic, serve this guacamole with rice crackers or fried wonton crisps.

- 1 teaspoon wasabi paste
- 1 tablespoon sesame oil
- 1 tablespoon reduced-salt soy sauce
- 2 tablespoons freshly squeezed orange juice
- 2 avocados, diced
- 2 tablespoons cilantro
- 2 scallions, green part only, chopped
- ½ cup diced mango
- ¼ cup orange segments
- ¼ cup diced jicama
- black sesame seeds, for garnish

In a small bowl, combine wasabi paste, sesame oil, soy sauce and orange juice. Whisk together until wasabi is fully incorporated into the mixture. Add avocado, and mash with a fork to blend with the sauce. Add cilantro and scallions; stir. Taste; adjust wasabi, sesame oil, and soy sauce as needed. Gently combine mango, orange segments and jicama. Garnish with sesame seeds, and serve. **CP**

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