

Fully Loaded Nachos



Vegetarians may use refried or baked beans (canned or homemade) instead of the meat in these nachos. Or just leave it out to make a batch of Partially Loaded Nachos.

¾ lb (375 g)	ground beef
⅓ cup (75 mL)	salsa (mild or hot—however you like it)
4 cups (1 L)	tortilla chips
2 cups (500 mL)	shredded cheddar or Monterey Jack cheese

Crumble the ground beef into a skillet, and cook, stirring, over medium heat for 5 to 7 minutes, until no longer pink. *Or*, if you have a microwave, crumble the beef into a microwave-safe bowl, and zap it on high power for 4 to 6 minutes, stirring once or twice, until the meat is no longer pink. Either way, drain off the fat, and then stir in the salsa.

In a regular oven, arrange all the tortilla chips on a baking sheet and top, as evenly as possible, with the meat mixture. Sprinkle with the cheese. Bake at 400° F (200° C) for 10 minutes, just until the cheese is melted.

In a microwave oven, arrange the chips on 2 microwaveable plates, top with the meat mixture and the cheese, evenly divided between the two. Zap plates on high power, one at a time, for 1½ to 2½ minutes, until cheese is melted.

Add tomatoes, olives, sour cream, peppers, whatever. Or not. It's good any old way.

This makes enough Fully Loaded Nachos to ruin two people's appetites entirely for dinner.

Leaf printing

As a child, I loved making bark rubbings using crayons so the bark pattern of a tree transferred onto paper. Now I'm older I still love bark rubbing; our daughter does too, using her designs to make wrapping paper. I've also discovered this is a great way to transfer the patterns and colours of nature's plants.

AGE Any

TIME 5+ minutes

TOOLS Chopping board (or any hard surface), scissors, hammer, mallet or pounding stone

MATERIALS Cotton sheet, common abundant plants

Step 1

Cut out a square from the cotton sheet to the size you desire.

Step 2

Collect various plants you wish to use in your design. Bracken, buttercups, dock leaves and tree leaves all work well. Be sure you don't pick anything poisonous – remember, if in doubt, leave it out. Only use fresh plants and flowers and only pick from areas where the plants are abundant.

Step 3

Place your leaves and plants either one at a time or arranged in a pattern on the chopping board or hard surface. Place the cotton square over the top. Using the hammer or mallet, repeatedly hit the area with your plants underneath and watch as your colourful pattern comes through!

Tip

This activity works best in spring and summer when the leaves and plants are full of moisture.





Variations

Use these beautiful pieces of art as part of another project. Tie them onto a stick to make a wall hanging or tapestry, or sew a few of them together to make a nature collector's bag.

