

Huauzontle Patties – *Tortitas de huauzontle*

Ingredients

1 bunch huauzontle seed heads
4-6 slices melting cheese (such as Oaxaca, mozzarella or Havarti)
2 eggs; whites and yolks separated (or more, depending on the size of the seed heads)

All-purpose flour, as needed (or corn starch, such as Maizena™, for gluten free option)

Salt, to taste

Oil, for frying

To serve: Sauce such as cooked green (tomatillo), *caldillo* (tomato), or red mole

To prepare the *huauzontle*, wash thoroughly, then boil in a pot with water. Depending on size, they will need between 5 and 15 minutes to turn a bright shade of green; remove from water, drain on paper towels. Sprinkle flour (or corn starch) on a tray or plate, then arrange half of the *huauzontle* into mounds on top; divide sliced cheese amongst the mounds, then cover with the other half of the *huauzontle*. Sprinkle more flour on top, and reserve. In a clean and dry bowl, beat the egg whites until foamy and white, then add the yolks, slowly folding until incorporated into a smooth batter. Place tray with mounds and bowl of batter next to the stove. In a pot, warm up sauce of choice, and keep gently simmering. In a frying pan, pour enough oil to fully cover the bottom (a small pan will require less oil) and warm up over medium-high heat. Once the oil forms ripples but it is not smoking, reduce heat to medium. Pick up one *huauzontle* and cheese mound from the flour using two spatulas and take to the batter bowl; while holding the mound on one spatula, coat the top with batter using the other spatula. Gently flip the patty onto the hot oil, so the battered side is down; it should bubble and make a sizzling sound. Coat the top of the patty with more batter. Allow to cook until golden brown, about a minute, then flip, to brown the other side, carefully splashing the sides of the patty with oil using the spatula, to brown the sides, as well. Remove from pan onto a plate with paper towels, and repeat with the rest of the mounds, checking for oil temperature in between patties. Just before serving, add patties to the pot of simmering sauce. Allow patties to absorb sauce for just a minute or less, so they will not get too soggy. Serve with plenty of sauce:

