

This 20-Minute Dinner Is So Easy, My Teenager Makes It Every Week

They're picky-eater friendly and ready in about 20 minutes.

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I am a mother to a famously picky son. Seriously—when he was little, I wrote for the *New York Times* about the, uh, fun I had as a food writer with a child so selective he ate roughly ten things.

The kiddo isn't so little anymore—he's about to head off for his first year of college—but he remains just as picky as he was over a decade ago. One exciting difference has emerged, though: Using a half-dozen recipes he took over from me the last few years, he cooks for himself.

This one, for the easiest chicken fajitas you can make at home, has become a much-loved family favorite. And why not? It's super-fast and a picky-eater special, since each person gets to assemble their ideal combo of tortillas, meat, veggies, and toppings.

For the last year or two, my son has made a chicken-only batch for himself weekly (because: picky). Once a month, he cooks the whole recipe for the family. Gotta say, a family dinner not cooked by me is a luxury I'll miss when he leaves for school.

Broiling Is Key

When you order fajitas in a Mexican restaurant, part of the thrill comes from that sizzling platter the server sets down in front of you. It's entertaining, yes, but it also lends the meat and veggies a nice char and a hint of smokiness.

When you're juggling a million other tasks, give up on showy flair and let the broiler do the work instead. Just make sure you don't get the food too close to the heating element; 4 to 6 inches away is perfect. Line the sheet pan with foil to make cleanup easier, too—you'll only have a cutting board, knife, and one mixing bowl to scrub.



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Keep It Speedy with Chicken Tenders and a Simple Seasoning

My version of this easy sheet pan fajitas recipe calls for chicken tenders for the easiest possible prep. You can also swap in an equivalent weight of boneless, skinless chicken breasts, just plan for a few extra minutes to cut them into strips.

Many fajita recipes often ask you to plan ahead and marinate the meat. On a busy weeknight, that doesn't happen here. Instead, we cut the tenders once, maybe twice if they're big, then toss them with the simplest seasoning before they hit the sheet pan—just [chili powder](#), salt, and olive oil. If you want to add a little more zing, a bit of ancho chili powder or cayenne does the trick.

Customize with Toppings

An array of toppings is what makes fajitas such a perfect option for picky eaters: You can opt for ~~all~~ the toppings—sour cream and [salsa](#) and [guacamole](#) and chopped scallions and shredded Monterey Jack and on and on—or none of the above.

Set out bowls with whatever toppings your family might like along with the chicken, vegetables, and [warm tortillas](#), and let each family member assemble their own idea of dinner perfection.



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Prep Time 10 mins

Cook Time 10 mins

Total Time 20 mins

Servings 4 servings

- 2 pepper bell peppers, any color
- 1 medium red onion
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 1 1/2 teaspoons salt, divided
- 1 1/2 to 2 pounds chicken tenderloins
- 2 teaspoons [chili powder](#)
- 1 lime, juiced, plus 1 cut into wedges for serving
- 8 small (6-inch) flour tortillas
- Optional toppings: salsa or pico de gallo, sliced avocado or guacamole, and/or sour cream

1. Preheat the broiler:

Turn the broiler on high with the oven rack placed 4 to 6 inches from the broiler element. Line a large rimmed baking sheet with aluminum foil.

2. Prep the vegetables:

Stem and seed the bell peppers, then slice them into 1/4-inch strips. Halve and peel the onion, then [slice it](#) into 1/4-inch strips as well. Transfer the sliced vegetables to the foil-lined baking sheet and toss with 1 tablespoon of the olive oil and 1/2 teaspoon of the salt.

3. Broil the vegetables:

Slide the baking sheet under the broiler and cook until the vegetables are softened and lightly charred, 4 to 8 minutes.

4. Prep the chicken:

Meanwhile, cut each chicken tender in half lengthwise or into thirds if they're large, forming roughly 1/2-inch strips. Transfer the chicken to a large bowl and toss with the remaining olive oil and salt and all of the chili powder.

5. Broil the chicken:

Once the peppers and onions are beginning to char, remove the sheet pan from the oven and scatter the chicken strips on top. Return to the oven and broil until the chicken is cooked through and lightly browned, 4 to 6 minutes.

6. Warm the tortillas and serve:

While the fajitas are in the oven, stack the tortillas on a microwave-safe plate and top with a damp paper towel. Microwave until heated through, 30 to 40 seconds, then wrap in a dish towel to keep warm.

Drizzle the lime juice over the cooked chicken and vegetables. Serve immediately with the warmed tortillas, lime wedges, and your choice of toppings.

Store leftovers in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 5 days.