Prep Time	25 minutes
Cook Time	25–30 minutes
Total Time	50–55 minutes
Skill Level	Easy to Intermediate
Servings	6 chimichangas
Cuisine	Mexican-American
Method	Baking (oven)

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Why You’ll Love This Recipe

Traditional chimichangas are deep-fried, which makes them delicious but heavy. This baked version delivers the same crackly, golden exterior by brushing the tortillas with a touch of oil and baking them at high heat on a preheated surface. The result is a chimichanga that shatters when you bite into it — without the mess, the smell, or the extra calories of a vat of oil.

The filling is a savory blend of seasoned shredded chicken, refried beans, green chiles, and melted cheese. It’s flexible, too: swap in leftover pulled pork, ground beef, or a vegetarian black-bean filling (see Variations below).

Ingredients

For the Filling

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 small yellow onion, finely diced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon chili powder

- ½ teaspoon smoked paprika
- ½ teaspoon dried oregano
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- 2 cups cooked shredded chicken (rotisserie works beautifully)
- 1 (4 oz) can diced green chiles, drained
- 1 (15 oz) can refried beans
- 1½ cups shredded Monterey Jack or cheddar cheese (or a blend)
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro (optional)
- 1 tablespoon fresh lime juice

For Assembly

- 6 large (10-inch) flour tortillas, at room temperature

- 3 tablespoons neutral oil (canola, vegetable, or avocado), for brushing
- ¼ cup sour cream, thinned with 1 tablespoon water (for sealing)

For Serving

- Sour cream
- Fresh salsa or pico de gallo
- Guacamole
- Shredded lettuce and diced tomato
- Pickled jalapeños

Equipment

- Large skillet
- Mixing bowl

- Baking sheet (rimmed)
- Pastry brush
- Wire rack (optional, for cooling)
- Kitchen tongs

Instructions

Step 1 — Preheat the Oven and Pan (10 minutes | Intensity: Low)

Place a rimmed baking sheet on the middle rack of your oven and preheat to 425°F (220°C). Let the empty pan heat for at least 10 minutes while you make the filling. A blistering-hot pan is the secret to a crisp bottom crust — it mimics the immediate sizzle of a fryer.

Step 2 — Sauté the Aromatics (5 minutes | Intensity: Medium)

Heat the olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat (about 325–350°F). Add the diced onion and cook, stirring occasionally, until soft and translucent, 4–5 minutes. Add the garlic, cumin, chili powder, smoked paprika, oregano, salt, and pepper. Stir constantly for 30–45 seconds until fragrant — do not let the spices scorch.

Step 3 — Build the Filling (3–4 minutes | Intensity: Medium-Low)

Add the shredded chicken, green chiles, and refried beans to the skillet. Stir to combine and

cook until heated through and the mixture is thick and cohesive, 3–4 minutes. If it looks loose or wet, cook 1–2 minutes longer — a dry filling is essential so the tortillas don't turn soggy. Remove from heat and stir in the lime juice and cilantro. Taste and adjust seasoning.

Step 4 — Cool and Add Cheese (5 minutes | Intensity: Low)

Transfer the filling to a bowl and let it cool for 5 minutes, then fold in the shredded cheese. Cooling prevents the cheese from melting too early and keeps the filling easy to roll.

Step 5 — Warm the Tortillas (30–45 seconds | Intensity: Low)

Wrap the tortillas in a clean, damp kitchen towel and microwave for 30–45 seconds until pliable. Warm tortillas roll without cracking.

Step 6 — Fill and Roll (5 minutes | Intensity: Medium)

Lay one tortilla flat. Spoon about ⅔ cup of filling slightly below the center. Fold in the left and right sides, then roll up tightly from the bottom, burrito-style. Brush the far edge with the thinned sour cream and press to seal. Repeat with the remaining tortillas, keeping finished ones under a towel.

Step 7 — Brush and Arrange (2 minutes | Intensity: Low)

Brush each chimichanga all over — top, bottom, and sides — with the neutral oil. Place them seam-side down on the hot baking sheet, spacing them 1 inch apart.

Step 8 — Bake Until Golden (20–25 minutes | Intensity: Medium-High)

Bake at 425°F (220°C) for 20–25 minutes, turning once with tongs at the 12-minute mark. They're done when deep golden brown and crisp all over, and an instant-read thermometer in the center registers at least 165°F (74°C).

Step 9 — Rest and Serve (5 minutes | Intensity: Low)

Let the chimichangas rest on the pan for 5 minutes — the filling is molten. Serve topped with sour cream, salsa, guacamole, lettuce, tomato, and pickled jalapeños.

Time & Intensity Summary

Phase	Time	Heat Intensity
Preheat oven + pan	10 min	Low (passive)
Sauté aromatics	5 min	Medium
Build filling	3–4 min	Medium-Low
Cool + add cheese	5 min	Low (passive)
Warm tortillas	30–45 sec	Low
Fill and roll	5 min	Medium (hands-on)
Brush and arrange	2 min	Low
Bake	20–25 min	Medium-High (oven)
Rest	5 min	Low (passive)
Total	~50–55 min	Overall: Easy

Nutrition (Per Serving — 1 Chimichanga)

Estimated; based on 6 servings without optional toppings.

Nutrient	Amount
Calories	~430 kcal
Total Fat	20 g
Saturated Fat	7 g
Cholesterol	55 mg

Nutrient	Amount
Sodium	720 mg
Total Carbohydrates	36 g
Dietary Fiber	4 g
Total Sugars	2 g
Protein	26 g