

RECIPES

Turco Tamales

These tamales are delicious anytime, but I particularly like them at Christmas. The recipe can be doubled, trippled, or quadrupled, and they freeze very well. To reheat them, simply steam frozen tamales for 15 minutes.

MaSeca makes two kinds of cornflour. One is all-purpose for tortillas and tamales, and the other is specifically formulated for tamales. If possible that is the one you should use as it produces tamales that are lighter and fluffier. While tamales can be made by hand, the job is far easier using a stand mixer, and that is what the recipe is based on. Because getting the measurements right is so important, I also suggest you use an electronic food scale rather than volume measurements.

The masa

9 ounces MaSeca instant corn *masa* flour (about 1 ¾ cups)
1 1/2 cups poultry broth or water
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon salt
5 ounces lard, butter, duck fat or coconut oil at room temperature.

Place the dry corn flour in a bowl and add the water or broth. Mix with a wooden spoon, then knead briefly with your hands to make sure all the liquid is incorporated. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap or a damp towel and allow the *masa* to rehydrate for 30 minutes.

Place the fat in the mixer's bowl and, using the whisk attachment, beat it at medium to medium high speed until it is light and creamy, scraping down the bowl as necessary, about 2 minutes. Add the baking powder and salt, and beat for another minute. Add the rehydrated *masa* and, still with the whisk attachment, beginning at low speed and gradually increasing it to medium high, beat for 1 minute, then continue beating for a total of 10 minutes, stopping to scrape down the sides of the bowl 2 or 3 times, or as necessary. Test the *masa* by taking a 2 inch piece and placing it carefully in a glass of cold water where it should float. If it does not, continue beating for another 2 minutes. If it still does not float the measurements are probably off and a little more room temperature fat should be added, a tablespoon at a time, until the dough floats.

The *masa* recipe makes about 12 tamales of 1/4 cup *masa* each.

The Tamales

Dried cornhusks for wrapping tamales
1 recipe *masa* (above)
1 1/2 cups [TURCO](#) filling
String, ribbon (whose dye will not run), or strips of cornhusks to tie the tamales

Submerge about 15 large cornhusks in hot water and allow them to rehydrate for at least 1 hour.

When the cornhusks are pliable, dry them and place 1/4 cup of the *masa* roughly in the center of one, and spread it out so it covers an area of about 4 inches by 4 inches. Place about 1 1/2 tablespoons of the turco filling down the center of the *masa*. Fold the cornhusk to enclose the filling in the *masa* and roll it into a tight cylinder. Tie the tamale at each end.

When all the tamales have been filled, place them in a steamer, at least 2 inches above the water. It is a good idea to line the bottom of the steamer with an extra cornhusk or two. Bring the water to a boil, cover the steamer tightly and steam for 1 hour, and then turn off the heat and allow the tamales to continue steaming for 15 minutes. If you wish, put a coin in the bottom of the steamer. It's noise will alert you if the water is about to evaporate.