

CHEF CULTURES LLC

MEXICAN SOPEES

Traditional Masa Cakes with Beans & Fresh Toppings

Prep Time: 20 minutes **Cook Time:** 20 minutes **Yield:** 4 Portions (4–6 Sopes)

Description

Sopes are a beloved Mexican antojito (street snack) made from thick rounds of masa that are lightly griddled, shaped with a raised edge, and topped with savory ingredients. The small rim around the edge forms a natural border that holds beans, meats, fresh vegetables, crema, and cheese. Rooted in the culinary traditions of central and southern Mexico, sopes showcase the versatility of nixtamalized corn masa—a cornerstone of Indigenous foodways throughout Mesoamerica. Crisp on the outside and tender inside, sopes offer a balance of warm corn flavor, creamy beans, fresh vegetables, and bright salsas.

Ingredients

Masa Base:

- 1 cup masa harina (nixtamalized corn flour) *chef's choice - [Masienda](#)
- 3/4-1 cup warm water
- Pinch kosher salt
- 1 teaspoon neutral oil

For Light Frying:

- 1 tablespoon neutral oil or lard

Traditional Toppings:

- ½ cup refried red beans
- 1 cup finely shredded lettuce
- ½ cup shredded chicken or beef (optional)
- ¼ cup queso fresco, crumbled
- 2 tablespoons white onion, finely chopped

Optional Garnishes:

- Mexican crema or sour cream
- Sliced radishes



- Diced tomato
- Avocado slices
- Salsa roja or salsa verde
- Shredded chicken
- Pickled jalapeños and carrots

Directions

1. In a bowl combine masa harina and salt. Gradually add warm water while mixing until a soft dough forms with the texture of play dough. Knead briefly until smooth. Cover with a damp towel and rest 5–10 minutes.
2. Divide the dough into 4–6 equal balls and keep covered.
3. Place a dough ball between two pieces of plastic and press gently in a tortilla press or with a flat plate to form a thick tortilla about 4 inches wide.
4. Heat a comal or skillet over medium heat. Cook each tortilla about 1 minute per side, flipping twice until lightly set but still soft.
5. Remove from heat and allow to cool briefly. While still warm, pinch the edges with your fingers to create a raised rim forming the traditional sope shape.
6. Heat oil or lard in a skillet over medium heat. Fry the shaped sopos 30–45 seconds per side until lightly crisp and golden. Drain on paper towels.
7. Spread a layer of warm refried beans over each sope and top with lettuce, meat (if using), onion, queso fresco, crema, and salsa.
8. Serve immediately while warm.

Chef Ron's Notes

- The raised rim is key—it creates a natural bowl for toppings.
- Sopos should be thicker than tortillas but not dense.
- Keep hands slightly damp when shaping masa to prevent cracks.
- Cook tortillas just enough before shaping; overcooking makes them difficult to pinch.
- A topping bar is a great teaching method for cooking classes.

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